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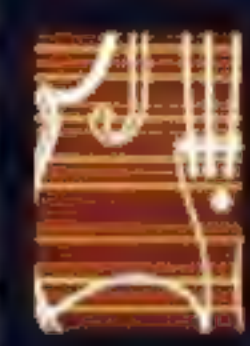
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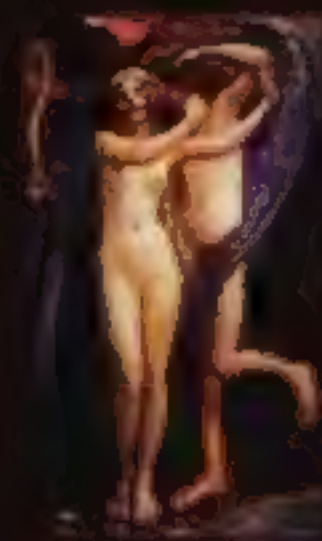
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CD OF THE MONTH

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Four Ballades & Four Scherzos
STEPHEN HOUGH



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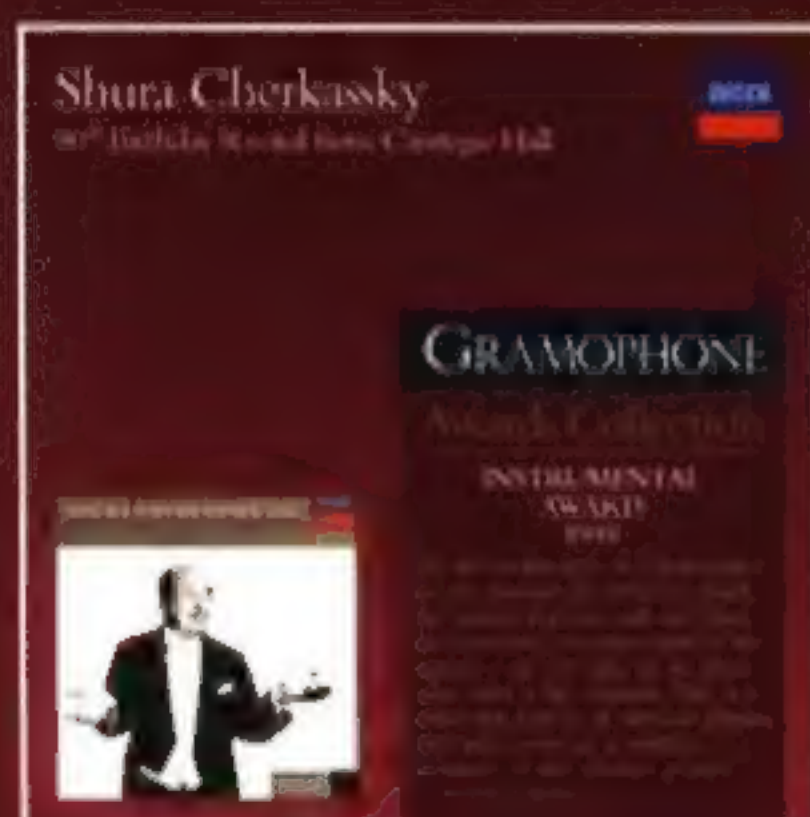
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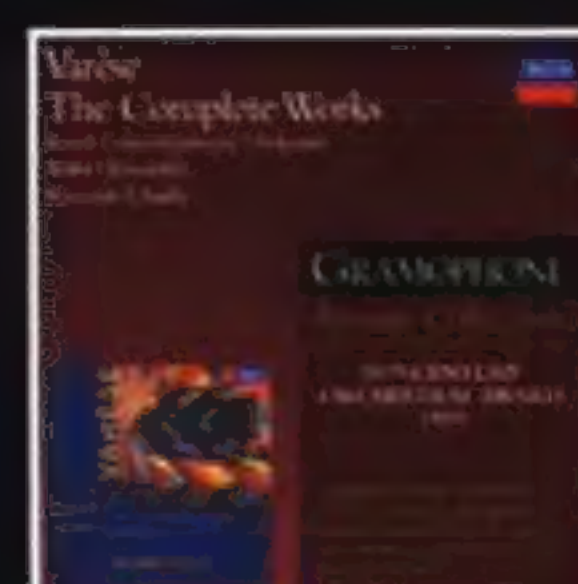
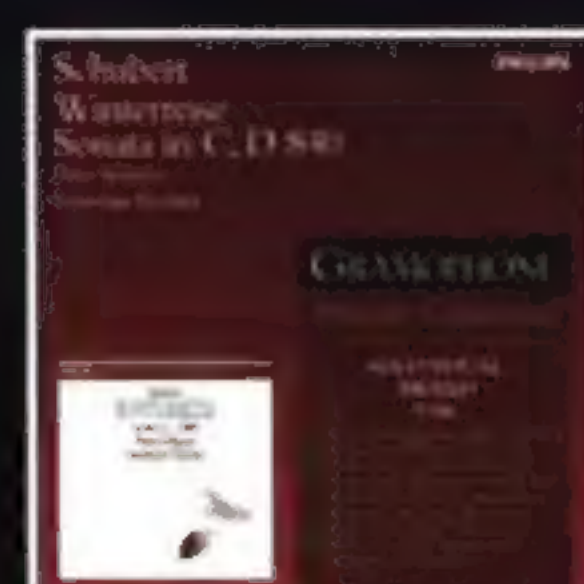
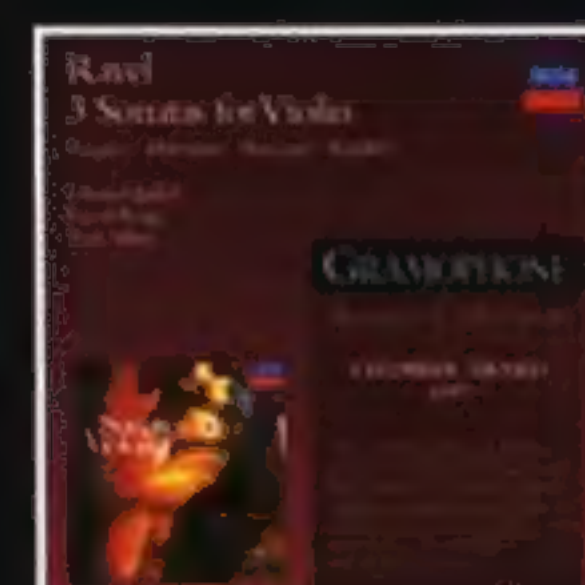
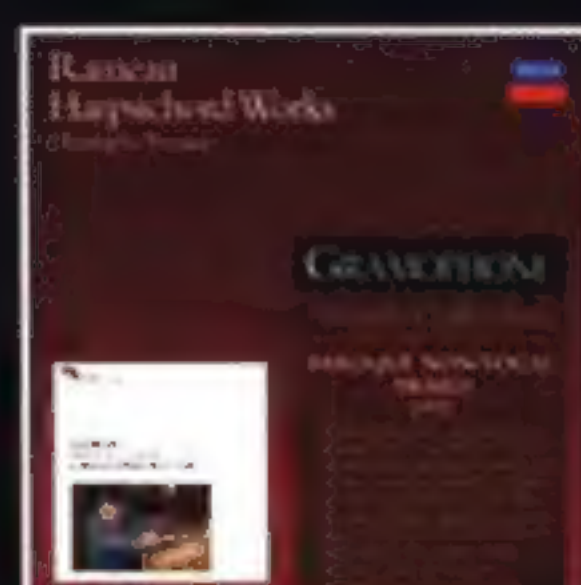


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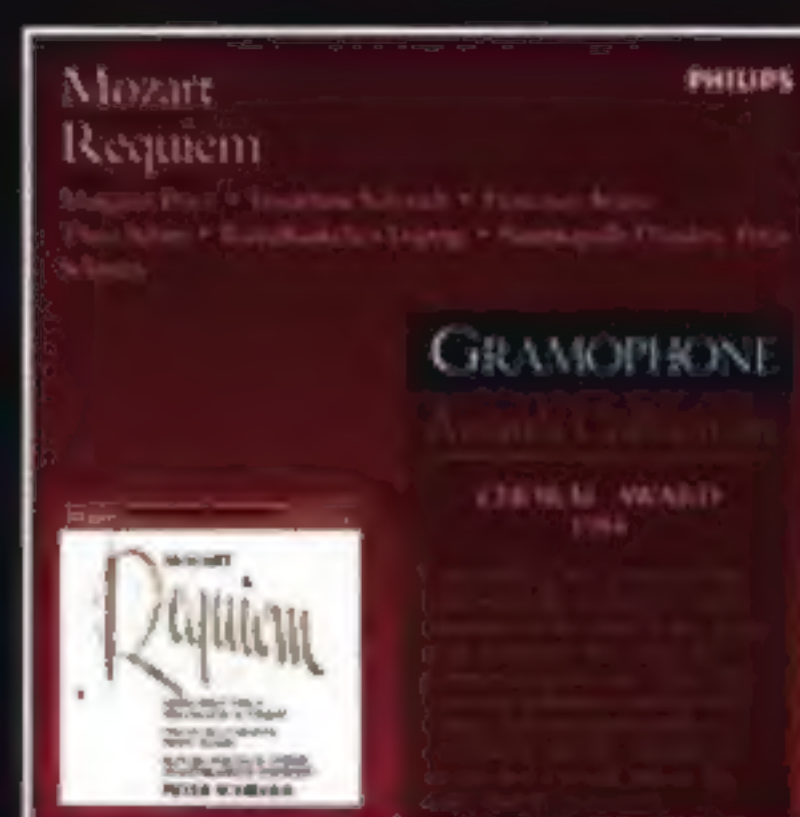
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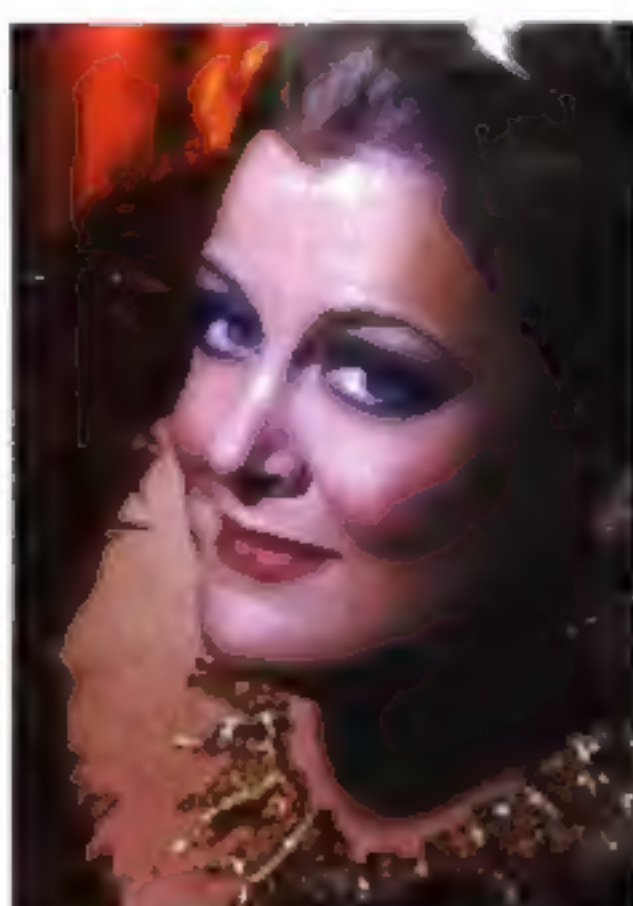
THE CLASSICAL MUSIC MAGAZINE

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Hear James Jolly's pick of this month's most outstanding discs on our cover CD



TRACK 1
REVIEW ON PAGE 66

CD OF THE MONTH

Chopin Four Ballades.
Four Scherzos
Stephen Hough *pf*
Hyperion

Ballade No 2 in A minor
Written in the 1850s and dedicated to Schumann, this is Chopin at his most mercurial. The gentle opening explodes into life with a storming second section that wears its heart on its sleeve after which the rocking opening theme returns to close the piece.

Stephen Hough has long enjoyed critical acclaim in these pages. It's not just because he combines a staggering technique with a genuinely engaging musical imagination, it's also because he's not content with *only* playing standard repertoire. His first *Gramophone* Award was for Hummel piano concertos (soon to return at mid-price as part of Chandos's 25th birthday celebrations) and subsequent Awards have been for Mompou, Sauer and Scharwenka (with Saint-Saëns as the most 'central' composer to gain him the honours). This month, it is standard fare – Chopin Ballades and *Scherzos* – but the playing and approach are anything but standard. Here is music that is heard across the world every day, given a totally fresh approach – and a gloriously successful one at that.



Mozart Le nozze di Figaro
Soloists; Ghent Collegium Vocale;
Concerto Köln / René Jacobs
Harmonia Mundi

Act 2, finale

The action hots up. The Count expects to find Cherubino hiding behind the door (and the Countess does too, much to her alarm). And who should emerge but Susanna...



Karłowicz Symphony in E minor, 'Rebirth', Op 7. Serenade in C, Op 2. Bianca da Molena, Op 6
BBC Philharmonic / Gianandrea Noseda
Chandos

Serenade – Waltz

A lilting touch of Vienna from this Polish-born composer – complex but very appealingly done



'Death and Devotion'
Cantatas by **Buxtehude, C. Ritter, Tunder and Weckmann**
Johannette Zomer *sop* **Peter Harvey** *bass* **Netherlands Bach Society / Jos van Veldhoven**
Channel Classics

Tunder: An Wasserflüssen Babylon
'By the waters of Babylon, we sat down and cried'



'The Secret Bach'
Christopher Hogwood *clavichord*
Metronome

Fugue in G minor, BWV1000

This piece may be familiar as an arrangement from Bach's First Solo Violin Sonata (the precedent being the composer's own arrangements for organ and lute). It's all very convincing: JSB would have approved!



Machaut Motets
The Hilliard Ensemble
ECM New Series

Lasse! je sui en aventure

'Alas! I am in danger' – a tortuous warning against vanity, using the myth of Narcissus and Echo as the focus for this cautionary motet.

TRACK 2 **REVIEW ON PAGE 89**

One of the most dynamic period-instrument conductors in Europe, René Jacobs, is also, thankfully, one of the most prolific in the studios. How splendid then, that *Gramophone's* current Record Label of the Year is carrying the torch for recorded opera with a superb new *Figaro*. With Simon Keenlyside and Véronique Gens heading the cast, this set captures some of today's finest singers.

TRACK 3 **REVIEW ON PAGE 47**

The release, late in 2002, of a disc of orchestral music by Mieczysław Karłowicz (1876-1909) came to me as quite an ear-opener. Here is a strong, lushly Romantic musical voice couched in a language that is skilfully handled and confidently presented. Just as Yan Pascal Tortelier has passed the baton of the BBC Phil to Gianandrea Noseda, so these Karłowicz recordings have passed – with notable success – to the Italian.

TRACK 4 **REVIEW ON PAGE 85**

I'm not quite sure whether one should use the word 'ravishing' to describe a collection of North German church music, but in performances as sensitive and skilful as these it seems only appropriate. The work by Franz Tunder (Buxtehude's son-in-law) features the light, flexible soprano of Johanne Zomer. Jos van Veldhoven and his Dutch musicians continue to enhance their collective reputation with this tremendous disc.

TRACK 5 **REVIEW ON PAGE 67**

Recordings of the clavichord are uncommon – the delicate sonority may be something of a drawback – but Christopher Hogwood reminds us in his booklet-note that, according to Bach's biographer JN Forkel, the composer was particularly fond of the instrument as 'the most convenient for the expression of his most refined thoughts'. It's certainly an alluring sound, especially when played with the devotion of a master Bachian.

TRACK 6 **REVIEW ON PAGE 79**

Thirty years of performing together reach a major recorded milestone in this wonderful disc of music by the 14th-century Guillaume de Machaut. The sound of the group, as Matthew Power points out in his interview, is instantly recognisable – and whether it's in music from the 14th century or from the present day, has enormous appeal.

See interview on page 13



Britten. Ravel. Respighi. Schulhoff. Shostakovich. Vocal works
Magdalena Kožená *mez et al*
DG

Respighi: Il tramonto (excerpt)
The opening of this meditation on unrequited love set to a poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley and scored for mezzo and string quartet

TRACK 7 REVIEW ON PAGE 83

Since her first disc of Bach, this Czech mezzo has proved a versatile and inquisitive performer, ranging from Handel to Britten and Shostakovich (as here), from Gluck to French opera arias. This collection of works by five composers also finds her singing in five different languages: her ease in assimilating each of them is evident.

See also 'A Question to...' on page 9



Tenor Arias by **Cilea, Donizetti, Puccini and Verdi**
Joseph Calleja *ten* Giuseppe Verdi
Chorus and Symphony Orchestra,
Milan / Riccardo Chailly
Decca

Cilea: L'arlesiana – E la solita storia
Federico longs for the oblivion of sleep to escape the tormenting vision of his beloved

TRACK 8 REVIEW ON PAGE 92

In the style of London buses, this Italian opera arias disc follows hot on the heels of one last month by the Mexican Rolando Villazón. This month it's the turn of a young Maltese tenor called Joseph Calleja – Riccardo Chailly, the sensitive accompanist on this disc, is particularly enthusiastic; not surprisingly given the supple lyric quality of this attractive voice.

This CD is released on May 10



Monteverdi L'Orfeo
Soloists; Le Concert d'Astrée /
Emmanuelle Haïm
Virgin Classics Veritas

Act 4, conclusion
Orpheus hymns the power of his lute before losing his newly reconciled wife Euridice as he turns to look at her, against every injunction

TRACK 9 REVIEW ON PAGE 89

Ian Bostridge, Natalie Dessay and Patrizia Ciofi (Susanna on this month's splendid new *Figaro*) head a superb cast in this new recording of one of the first operas ever composed. Emmanuelle Haïm, among the hottest new properties in the period-performance world, directs a deliciously (and appropriately) Latin interpretation of this powerful work of loss and reconciliation.



Hummel Missa solemn in C. Te Deum
Soloists; Tower Voices New Zealand; New Zealand Symphony Orchestra / Uwe Grodd
Naxos

Missa solemn – Kyrie
The powerful opening section of Hummel's Mass – 'Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy'

TRACK 10 REVIEW ON PAGE 77

It was Richard Hickox's outstanding – and Gramophone Award-winning – Chandos recording of two Hummel Masses last year that focused attention on these confident and accomplished settings. With typical Naxos initiative, this fine disc follows with alacrity. And good to see music-making of this vigour and mastery coming from New Zealand – it makes a change from hobbits.



REPUTATIONS TRACK 11

The great German pianist **Wilhelm Kempff** left a large recorded legacy, primarily for DG, though with a clutch of discs for Decca during the 1950s. Stephen Plaistow, who produced some recordings with Kempff for the BBC, looks back over this gentle man's career and suggests some recordings that best display Kempff's musicianship. Hear him in Schumann's *Arabeske* (DG 469 286-2GP2).

COLLECTION TRACK 12

With Covent Garden recently reviving Verdi's **Simon Boccanegra**, we took the opportunity to survey the work's history on disc and film. Alan Blyth undertook the listening and comes down firmly in favour of the leading Verdi conductor of our day, Claudio Abbado. We sample his 1977 DG recording as things hot up in Act 1 scene 2 (DG 449 752-2GOR2).

COMPETITION TRACK 13

Identify the five beverages represented or referred to in these musical excerpts and win a dozen CDs (closing date: May 1).

GRAMOPHONE ON-LINE THIS MONTH

- **GramoFile**, the web's largest classical archive, with 33,500 reviews from over 20 years of *Gramophone*.

- **Competitions**: this month's prizes include a weekend for two in Scotland, staying at the Oban Caledonian Classic Hotel

- The latest announcements and events in the classical music world, explained and explored by our team of writers around the globe in the **daily news service**

- Free access to the **Grove Concise Dictionary** – 1000s of facts at the click of a mouse

- Find UK concerts using the **listings services** in association with concert-diary.com

- **Gramophone Chat Forum** members are discussing Vaughan Williams' Fifth Symphony, Klemperer's Brahms, Toscanini's Beethoven, the all-time best

Tosca and your favourite critics. Log on and join in!

- **Gramophone's Recommended Recordings** feature offers suggestions for the best buys of hundreds of key classical works.
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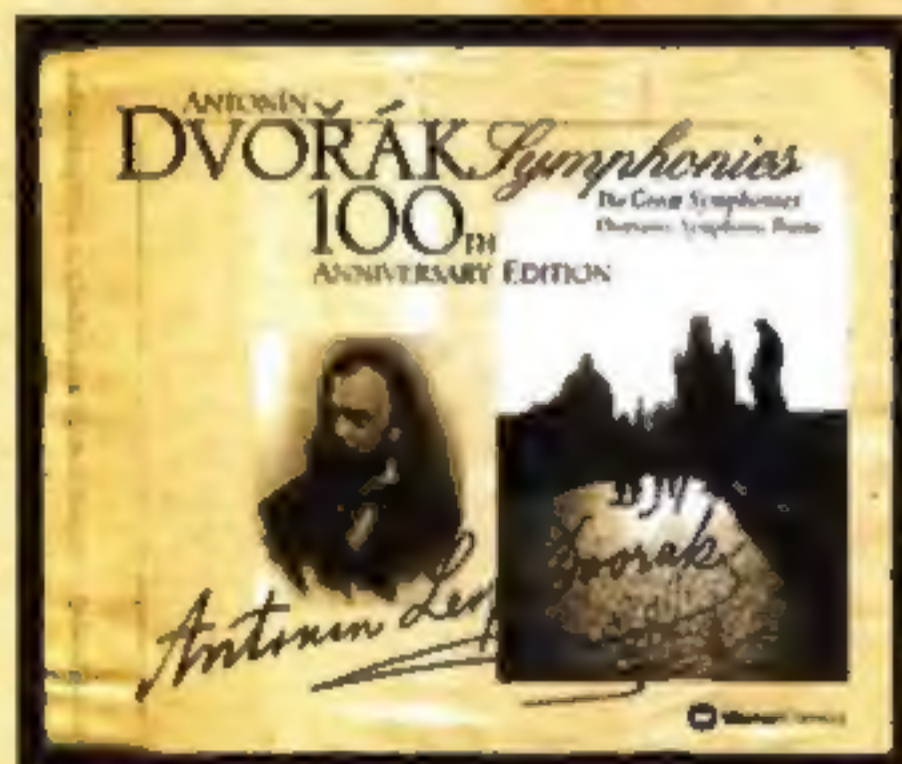


Symphonies, etc

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WALTON
Belshazzar's Feast

Part of our benchmark Walton encyclopaedia, this new recording of his searing cantata - regarded as the finest British choral work since Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* - brings together baritone Christopher Purves with the ENP under Paul Daniel.

"Electrifying performances which outstrip those of starry rivals... Under Daniel's taut direction, the orchestra presents Walton's kaleidoscopic scores with an invigorating freshness."

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ROSSINI
La Pietra del paragone

La pietra del paragone (The Touchstone) marks a unique phase of Rossini's development as a master of opera buffa. His genius for melody and sparkling, witty orchestration is already apparent in this relatively early work.

"Naxos's recording makes an excellent case for the opera. The live-performance provenance is a definite plus; for once the applause seems... like an intrinsic component of the work itself."

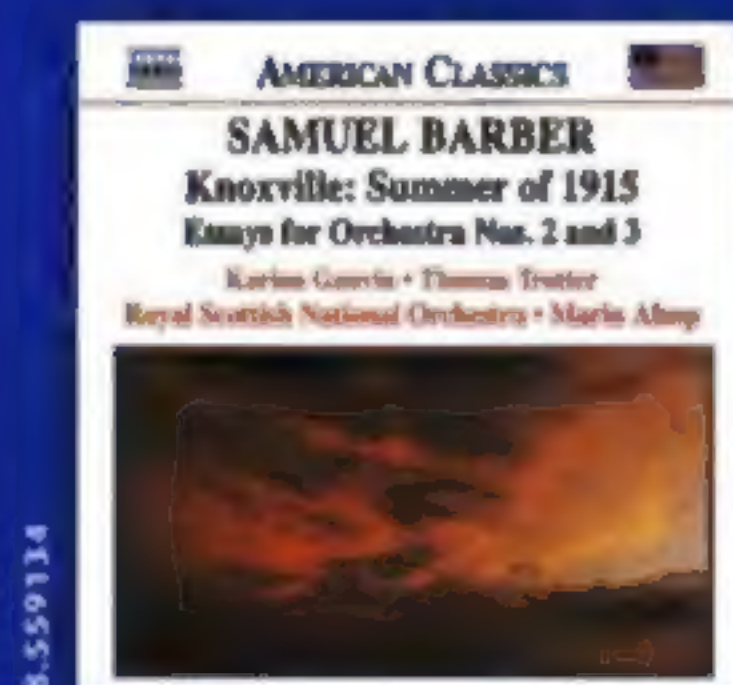
OPERA NEWS

on Rossini: *L'equivoco stravagante* 8.66087-88



PENDERECKI
Violin Sonatas

As well as including short pieces from either end of Penderecki's career, this disc features the world premiere recording of the Second Violin Sonata, which recalls not only his own First Violin Concerto but works by Schnittke and Shostakovich.



BARBER
Knoxville: Summer of 1915

Gramophone Artist of the Year Martin Alsop returns to the helm of the RSNCO in a radiant reading of Barber's ripely romantic *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, paired with the rarely recorded *Toccata Festiva* for organ and orchestra.

The fifth instalment in "Naxos' continuing and continuously revelatory series devoted to Barber's music." THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

"The exploration of Barber's works has persistently provided the brightest jewels in the Naxos crown." THE OBSERVER



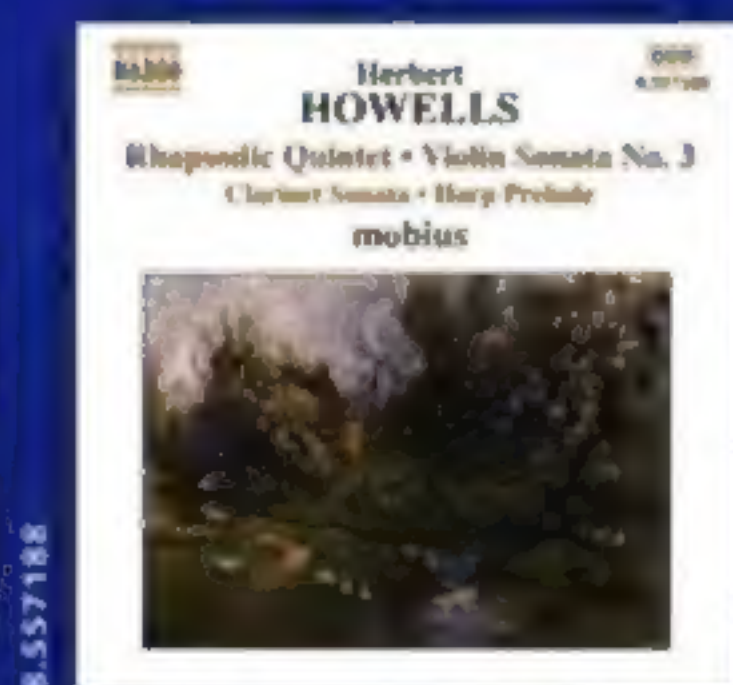
NORWEGIAN ORCHESTRAL FAVOURITES

This selection contrasts the more traditional Norwegian music inspired by folk-song and dance with the music of the 'progressive' composers active in the 1920s. Included are works by Sverreud, Valen and Tveitt among many others.



TCHAIKOVSKY
Piano Concertos Nos. 1 & 3

The big tunes and brilliant orchestration of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 contrast with the less familiar Piano Concerto No. 3, both performed here in crystal-clear surround sound by all-Russian forces.



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DIAMOND
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FOR THE RECORD

THIS MONTH IN THE WORLD OF CLASSICAL MUSIC

Barenboim leaves Chicago

Daniel Barenboim will step down as music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 2006, after 15 years in the role.

'After much soul-searching and reflection, I have come to realise that the position and responsibilities of a music director in America are changing in that they require many non-artistic activities, and I feel I have neither the energy nor the time to fulfil them. It is this consideration that has led to this very difficult decision,' Barenboim said in a prepared statement.

He did not elaborate on what these changes are, though the increasing demands on US music directors to engage in fund-raising duties is thought to be a factor.

The 61-year-old conductor and pianist is also music director of the Deutsche Staatsoper, Berlin, and recently established the West-East Divan orchestra for young Jewish and Arab musicians. He first appeared as a pianist with the CSO in 1969, and first conducted them in 1970. He also



MONIKA RITTERSHAUS

Barenboim: changes in responsibilities of US music directors forced decision

made his first CSO recording that year – an all-Dvořák disc with his wife, cellist Jacqueline du Pré. He was named music director designate in 1989, succeeding Sir Georg Solti in 1991.

CSO Board Chairman William H Strong said a search committee would be formed to identify a successor, 'charged with thoughtfully evaluating the needs of our

organisation'. The need for the CSO music director to become more of a public face for the organisation and a visible presence in the city is reported to be an important consideration.

Strong, expressing gratitude to Barenboim, said: 'The remaining two years of his tenure will be a superb time for us to admire and celebrate his musicianship.'

Montréal picks Nagano



ALVARA YANEZ

Kent Nagano, ocean-hopping maestro, to take over at Montréal in 2006

Kent Nagano will be the next music director of the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal.

His contract begins in 2006, though until then he will serve as musical adviser, conducting at least four concerts per season.

'It is with great pleasure and keen anticipation that I accept the invitation,' said Nagano, who was the unanimous first choice of the selection committee.

Nagano's previous roles include music director of the Opéra National de Lyon from 1988 to 1998, and music director of the Hallé Orchestra from 1991 to 2000.

He is currently artistic director and chief conductor of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and music director of the Los Angeles Opera.

Also in 2006 he will take up the position of chief conductor of the Bavarian State Opera.

Nagano will fill the vacancy left by Charles Dutoit, who resigned in April 2002 after 25 years in the job, following accusations of harassment and poor leadership.

Kindly do not smoke

Faced with the ban on smoking in public places, New Yorkers might find solace in the world premiere recording of Elgar's little-known *Smoking Cantata*.

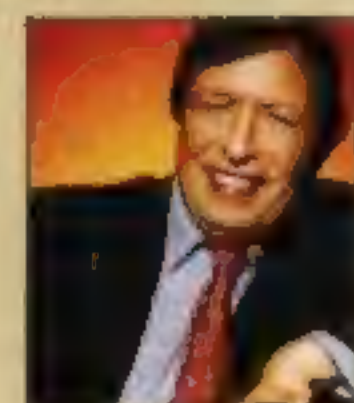
Elgar was visiting his friend Edward Speyer in 1919. During the visit, Speyer asked the composer to refrain from smoking in the hall or staircase.

His response was to plan a five-movement satirical cantata, though he only got round to writing a 40-second, nine-bar Wagnerian introduction, the full libretto of which reads: 'Kindly, kindly, kindly, do not SMOKE in the hall or staircase!'

Mark Elder conducts the curiosity on the latest Hallé release, sung by Andrew Shore.

Briefly

Gramophone Award-winning pianist Murray Perahia has been awarded an honorary knighthood for service to music.



PAUL POSTLE

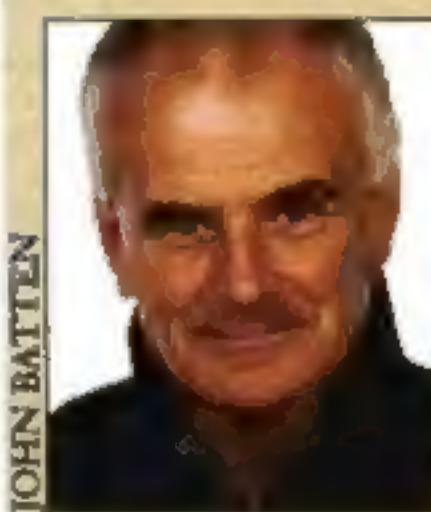
Avie has released the first recording of English composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's *Violin Concerto*, performed by Philippe Graffin and the Johannesburg Philharmonic. Coleridge-Taylor, born in London to an English mother and African father, wrote the piece for Maud Powell, who premièred it in 1912.



CORBIS

Sir Peter Maxwell Davies has been appointed Master

of The Queen's Music for a 10-year period. He sees the



JOHN BATTEN

role as an opportunity to promote music. 'I will compose some music for some occasions but that's not the primary function of this post', he said.

A QUESTION TO... MAGDALENA KOŽENÁ *mezzo*

How important are different languages in music interpretation?

In songs, language has the same value as the music. In the selection on my new recital disc I was interested to find out, and to show, how the language can shape the music, and how the language can change the mood.

Neither the words, nor the sounds the words make, have a greater importance. It's a whole package, I don't think that you can really separate them. Of course, in some music, like, for example, Dvořák's songs, the vocal line is generally more important, it's the

**'Neither the words
nor their sounds have
a greater importance'**

dominant thing. But in the songs of Shostakovich, or Britten, the words are really an equal partner to the music.

Czech is of course the easiest language for me! But I've come to enjoy French very much: the special nasal sound, that you don't have in other languages, it gives it a different colour. Of course in the beginning French was really difficult, but once you sing it a lot you can forget about getting every vowel right, and the moment when you can start to play with the language is the interesting moment. German is fine, too. Some people find it very hard – there are a lot of consonants, and sometimes you have a feeling that these consonants are cutting the line – but if you learn to use them, you can do something very special with the language.



SIMON FOWLER

United nations: Kožená sings Britten, Ravel, Respighi, Schulhoff and Shostakovich

I didn't start with the idea of having five languages on the disc. Firstly, I was looking for chamber music – for pieces not only for voice and piano, but for different instruments. Respighi was the first piece chosen. Then I had to decide to either do one composer, or maybe two which are combined in a sense, or to go for a very different thing. And I said 'Why not do something completely wide?'.

I hope it is a good portrait of Europe at the time. The first half of the 20th century (though the Shostakovich cycle was written a little later) was a very difficult period. We had two wars, and I find people tried to compensate for these horrible things with a kind of hope and light. I think all these cycles have that in common. The Russian cycle is maybe not about these wars, but about

Communism, which in a way was a similar catastrophe for Russian people. These pieces are different ways of dealing with traumatic situations of different nations.

Are they musically conservative pieces? No, I don't think so. For example, it was forbidden to play the Shostakovich cycle for a couple of years because it was really very, very much against the regime. And I think Ravel's music was a revolution at that time. And while Respighi is maybe not so modern for his age, I think it's very revolutionary for Italian music, because it really doesn't sound very Italian, and what I love on this cycle is that the voice is part of a string quartet. It is like Italian impressionism.

Magdalena Kožená's new disc is reviewed on page 83

Menuhin's memory safe with RAM

The Royal Academy of Music has purchased the archive of the late violinist Yehudi Menuhin for £1.2m.

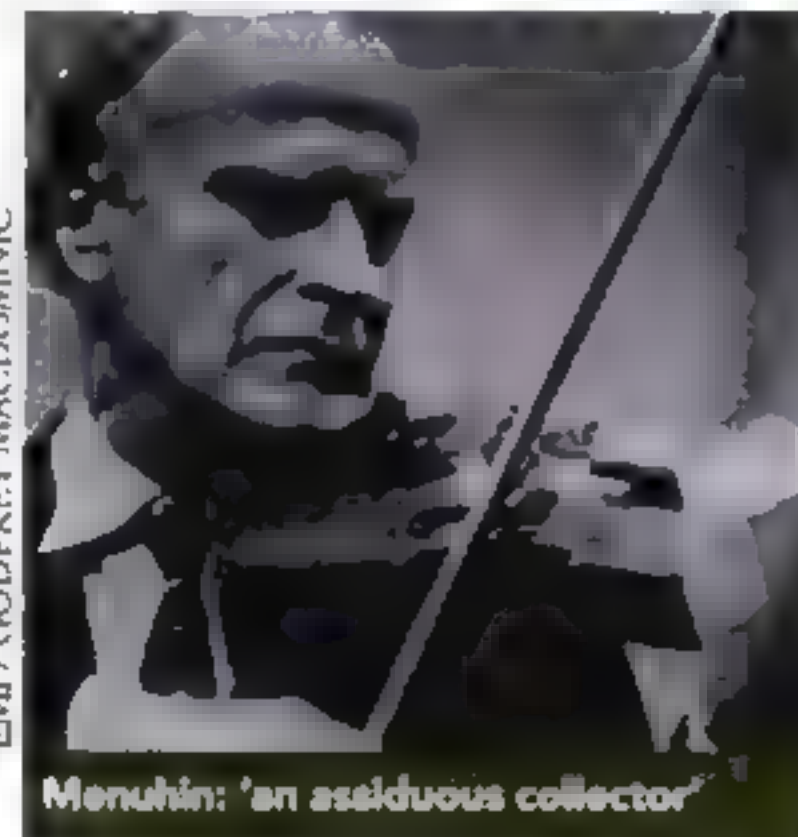
The collection, which includes autograph manuscripts, scores marked for performance, newspaper cuttings spanning Menuhin's life and letters from musicians including Elgar, Bartók and Britten and from other figures including Jawaharlal Nehru and Albert Einstein, is valued at £2m.

There were fears last year that the archive would have to be broken up and sold abroad after the RAM announced it had failed to secure sufficient funds to buy it. The Foyle Foundation subsequently donated the necessary £1.2m.

Work will now begin on cataloguing the archive, described by the RAM as 'one of the most valuable and comprehensive collections ever assembled by an individual musician'. An additional grant from the Foyle Foundation will be used to conserve its contents and make them accessible.

Selected items will be regularly displayed in the RAM's York Gate museum and research centre, which already houses collections belonging to musicians including Sir Arthur Sullivan, Sir Henry Wood and Sir John Barbirolli.

Professor Curtis Price, principal of the RAM, described Menuhin as 'an assiduous



EMI / GODFREY MACDONALD

Menuhin: 'an assiduous collector'

collector not only of material documenting his own long career, but of everything to do with the violin, violinists and the composers he knew'.

**'We really do seem
to be going through
a particularly rich
period at the moment'**

Every month I take part in a radio programme on XM Classics in the US. About five hours (music included!) is devoted to Editor's Choice and we discuss the releases and generally talk about what's happening in the classical music world. Every so often the question 'How easy is it to choose 10 discs?' comes up. For the past three months or so the answer comes from the direction, not how easy is it to get up to 10 but how difficult to narrow it down to 10.

We really do seem to be going through a particularly rich period at the moment – enterprising repertoire is offset by standard works in challenging or just deeply satisfying interpretations. Taking discs that *didn't* make it into Editor's Choice this month, though which certainly made it to the (not so short) short list, were two sets of the Schumann symphonies – one in the traditional mould from Daniel Barenboim, one characteristically original from David Zinman – or a unique coupling of the violin concertos by Berg and Britten. There's also a gorgeous Reynaldo Hahn chamber music disc. Or a disc of Richard Strauss and Wagner operatic excerpts from Deborah Voigt – a forceful reminder that we really should be discussing her artistry rather than her physique.

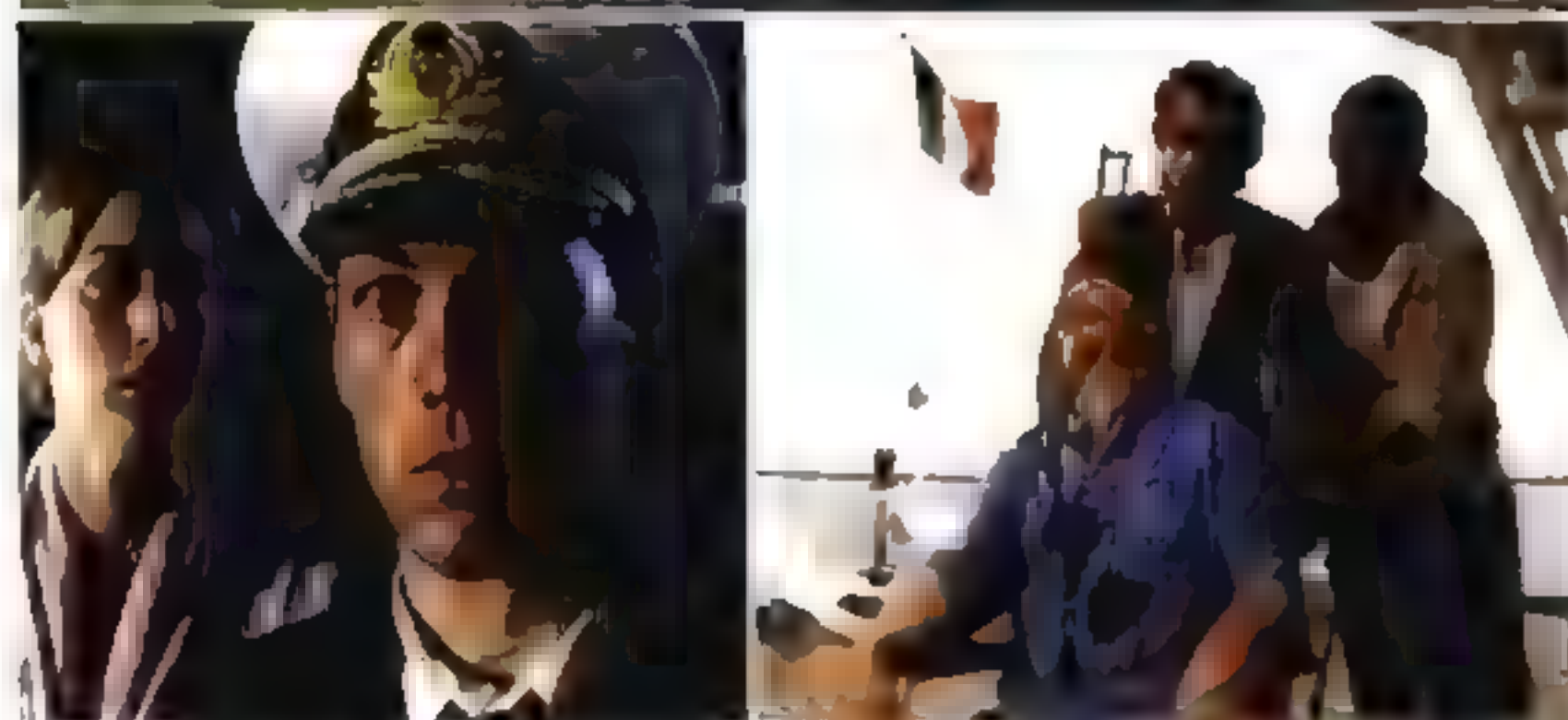
No, there's no shortage of excellence out there and it seems that the majors are responding to the challenge of the independent sector with some imaginative A&R of their own. Take Magdalena Kožená's new album – hardly the programming you'd expect from a major artist on a major label, but it's been done and it's a real winner.

I'm quietly confident that in this new and, let's admit it, difficult environment – and don't expect things to change, this is now the status quo – imagination, talent and skillful marketing will ensure that the record stores are still places of treasure and allure.

james.jolly@haynet.com

INTERVIEW: JOHN ADAMS

A modern tragedy caught on camera



Controversy has dogged *The Death of Klinghoffer*, John Adams's opera about the 1984 hijacking of the cruise ship Achille Lauro.

The premiere in Brussels came less than a month after the end of the 1991 Gulf War, and the work immediately became the centre of a critical firestorm, with Adams and librettist Alice Goodman accused of painting too sympathetic a portrait of the Palestinian terrorists who had murdered a Jewish passenger during the siege. Since then, opera houses have not been eager to produce *Klinghoffer*, though there have been a handful of concert performances, including the London premiere at the Barbican in 2002 and a semi-staged revival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music late last year. (In November 2001, the Boston Symphony cancelled performances of choral excerpts from the opera following the attacks on the World Trade Center.)

Director Penny Woolcock saw *Klinghoffer* in London and was impressed enough with the music's dramatic power to make a film version, first shown on Channel 4 last year and now released on DVD. Adams, who conducted the LSO for the film, was very excited by the result, and particularly by Woolcock's genuinely cinematic approach. 'It looks like a film', he says. 'The only difference is that people are singing instead of talking. On a technical level, I don't think this has been done before, with the cast running like crazy down the deck of this cruise ship, carrying Kalashnikovs or cowering under tables as they sing.'

Adams admits that Woolcock doesn't know a lot about music. 'Her feeling for it is completely intuitive, but she gets everything right. She realised early on, for example, that there's a very great difference between cinematic time and operatic time. In a film, we're used to sudden edits and shifts of mood, while in an opera, everything moves at a glacial pace.' This is a particularly important distinction in *Klinghoffer*, a surprisingly lyrical and introspective score with an important role for the choir. 'Penny understood that the choruses, which are moments

'Klinghoffer involves human forces that are out of control'

of reflection, need to be filled with something, so she created the story of two families. One is a young Jewish couple that comes out of the Holocaust and arrives in Palestine in 1948, at the time when the state of Israel is being



John Adams: making opera real

created; they later end up among the ship's hostages. The other is the family of one of the terrorists. You see these flashbacks in grainy black-and-white, like old home movies. These stories aren't in the libretto, though they're alluded to, and she weaves them into the film. It's a brilliant stroke.'

As for the opera's ability to spark controversy, Adams remains steadfast. 'I don't like to see the word "even-handed" in a review of *Klinghoffer*, because I think that indicates some kind of intention that one is not creating a work of art, but that one is creating a dialectical - a political - argument. I don't think the piece should be about that. To me, it's a tragedy, just like *Romeo and Juliet* or *King Lear*; it involves human forces that are out of control. Obviously, the problem is that it involves an event that happened to real people quite recently, so I do understand the potential that this opera has to offend some people.'

Eventually, one hopes, the opera will be judged on its musical merits. Perhaps Adams didn't anticipate that political discussion would overshadow the opera's music as it has, but he does not seem at all regretful about his choice of subject. Indeed, his interest in putting contemporary events on the operatic stage stems from his desire to get audiences more deeply involved. 'I've been working with Peter Sellars since 1985, and Peter believes that opera is a medium with immense potential to affect people on many levels - emotionally, spiritually, psychologically, socially. I wouldn't be composing operas if I didn't agree that the medium still has potential relevance in our time. The problem with opera, like many other large-scale art forms, is that it's so expensive to keep up and running that it becomes a hostage of the lowest common denominator at the box office.' He obviously has little patience for opera as escapist entertainment, or as a 'spectator sport.'

When it is suggested that *Klinghoffer* has been unlucky in its timing - its history too tightly interwoven with wars in the Middle East and terrorist attacks in the US - Adams shakes his head. 'Maybe not. Maybe that's what it's all about. Should we say "unlucky"? Or should we say that's what contemporary art should do - it should be right there, ready for the audience to trip over.'

Andrew Farach-Colton

The Death of Klinghoffer is reviewed on page 96

Birthday treat CDs

Chandos celebrates its 25th birthday in true record company fashion - by re-releasing 25 recordings at mid-price for a limited period.

They include the 2001 *Gramophone* Record of the Year - the original version of Vaughan Williams's *London* Symphony, with 20 minutes of reinstated music that its conductor Richard Hickox feels creates 'a symphony of Mahlerian epic proportions'.

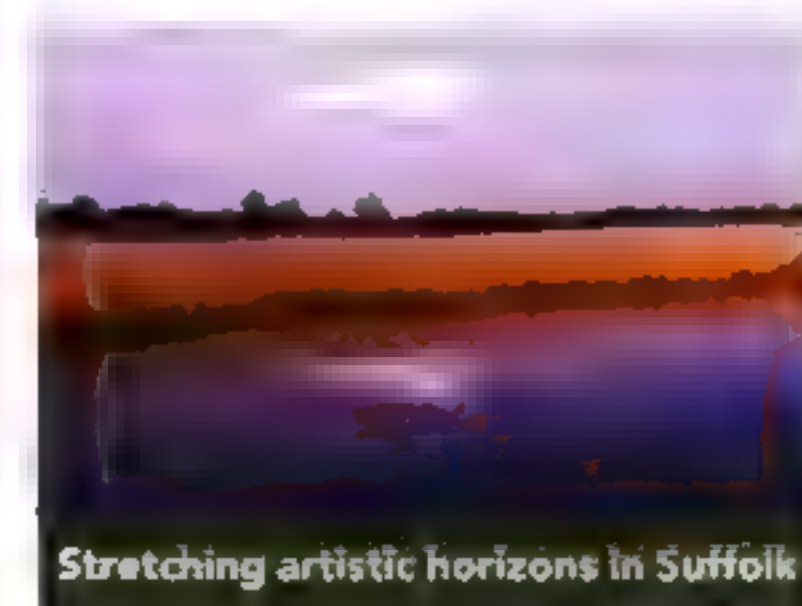
The other discs chosen span the label's 2500 releases, and number three other *Gramophone* Award-winners in their ranks: Bax's Fourth Symphony conducted by Bryden Thomson (1984 Engineering Award); Stephen Hough's recording of Hummel piano concertos, (1987 Concerto Award); and the Shostakovich violin concertos performed by Lydia Mordkovich (1990 Concerto Award).



New-burgh

Aldeburgh, where Benjamin Britten lived and founded his festival, is set to become a national centre for arts training and education thanks to a £4m commitment from Arts Council England.

Building the necessary rehearsal space and accommodation will cost an estimated £8m. ACE will meet half, while Aldeburgh Productions will have to raise the rest. Jonathan Reekie, Aldeburgh Productions chief executive, hopes it will 'build on the Britten legacy of performance, artist training and education', and 'enhance the Suffolk coast's reputation as an internationally recognised meeting point for artists and audiences'. Last year ACE's annual grant to Aldeburgh Productions was increased by 94 per cent to £872,000.



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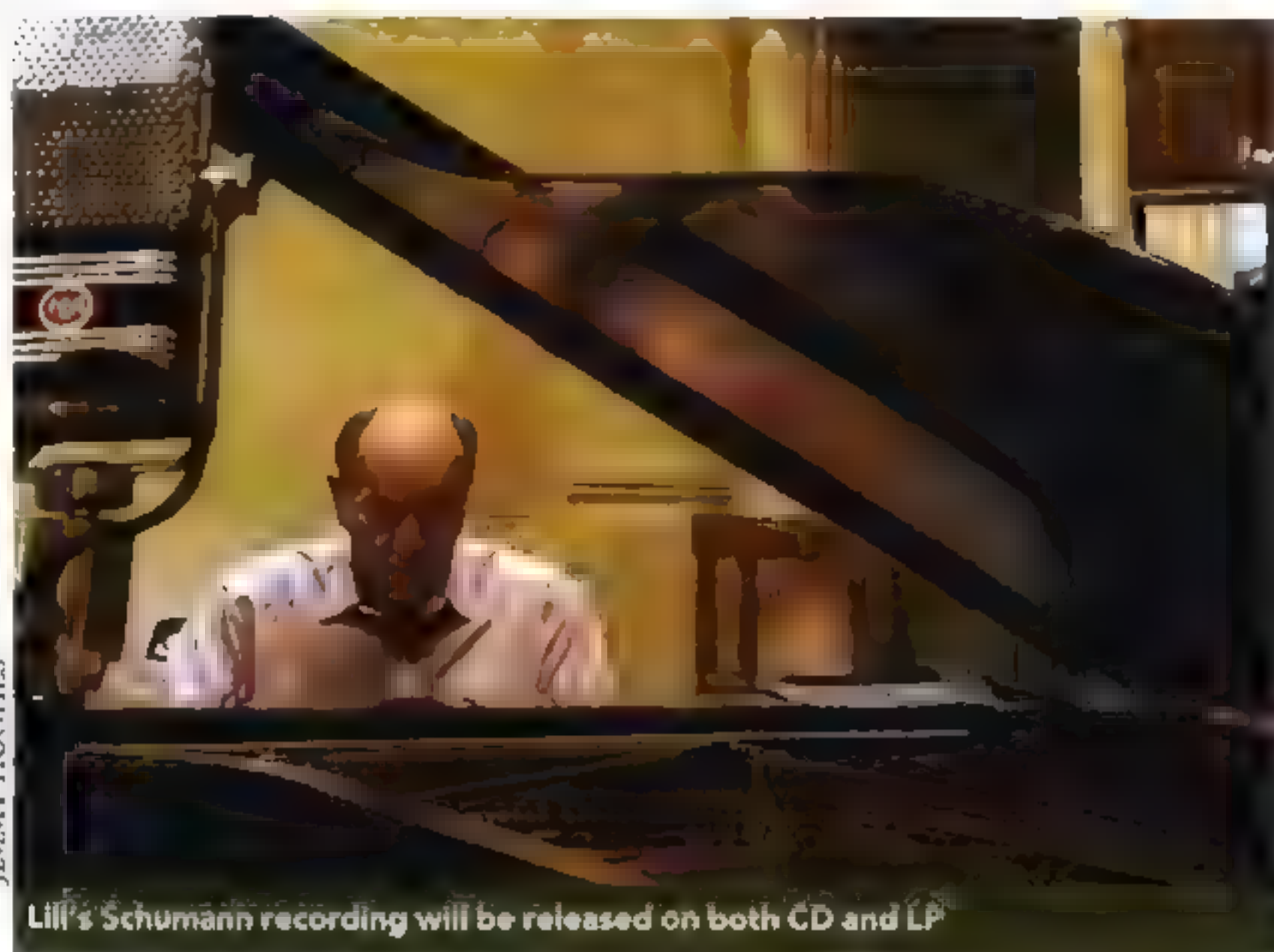
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SESSION REPORT: JOHN LILL

Back into the groove with Schumann



JIMMY HUGHES

Lill's Schumann recording will be released on both CD and LP

Recording sessions are usually tense affairs: the culmination of months, if not years, of preparation, every note subject to microscopic scrutiny by a stern, furrowed-brow producer, every extraneous sound that intrudes on the library-like gravitas subject to scornful looks of contempt.

The atmosphere in London's Henry Wood Hall today – where John Lill is recording Schumann's *Faschingschwank aus Wien* for a CFP 60th birthday recital disc – couldn't be more different. Boisterous banter and rapid-fire exchanges of insults between Lill, producer John Boyden and

engineer Tony Faulkner lend a jovial and relaxed air.

'Sorry about the informality,' apologises Lill (who first collaborated with Boyden on the Beethoven piano concertos with Sir Alexander Gibson in the mid 1970s). 'We've known each other for so many decades we get by better by swearing at each other.'

The bonhomie is clearly a catalyst to proceedings, and creates a greater sense of recording being a team-effort than I've encountered before. 'It's nice if you can get on well, if you've got some chemistry and a feeling of kindred spirit. Otherwise you're forever disagreeing and you can't get a

satisfactory conclusion. It's also important, in the case of Tony Faulkner, that you get a sound that you find very agreeable, and he does produce that as far as I'm concerned,' says Lill.

The session is far removed from the bit-by-bit mosaic approach so often employed. Lill sits down, plays the whole piece, repeats one or two short sections which may or may not be patched in later, and then for good measure does the whole thing again. Faulkner later tells me he made a mere half-a-dozen edits in the 76-minute-long disc.

'The closer the recording comes to a concert the better,' Lill says. 'Though of course it's never really like a concert, because every half-hour he gets to sit in the control room and review what he's doing. Does this lend an artificiality to the approach? Does it change the way he plays?'

'It shouldn't, and normally it doesn't. But if it's a question of clarity, then it can help: that what you think is coming out clearly may not be so, and vice versa. So it is with dynamics – for example, if you think you're playing something *piano* and it sounds much more healthy. As a pianist you never actually hear what comes out of the instrument because it's coming out sideways!'

Approaching the recording in this way also reaps rewards in terms of overall structural unity,

he claims. 'A strong architectural basis is vital – if you keep nibbling at it you may get a series of niceties, but it's like either sniffing at a flower or seeing the whole field – there is a critical height you can achieve where you can do both. That is to do with the right tempo, the right structure of the music and the ability to see every detail – but not at the expense of the total view.'

There is another reason for this approach. Faulkner has two recording machines in front of him – one digital and one analogue, the latter for a vinyl release. It's all delightfully retro, and certainly the first time I've seen the huge reels of tape spinning round on their horizontal bed.

At one point the three protagonists assemble to compare the two versions, and nod with approval – and for Lill something akin to surprise. 'I was very, very sceptical about the idea really,' he says, professing himself an advocate of the near-perfect and fluff-free sound reproduction that digital can achieve. 'But when I listened [to the vinyl] I was astonished that it had far more impact than the digital recording. So I must eat my words. It does have far more dynamic, a much greater range.'

Martin Cullingford

John Lill's Schumann disc is reviewed on page 69

ONE TO WATCH: JOSEPH CALLEJA *tenor*

What sort of musical opportunities did Malta offer?

Malta is a very beautiful place and I couldn't imagine being somewhere better than this. The disadvantage when compared to big cities is we don't have a full-scale opera house churning out operas. You only have three productions per year. But people do know about opera here, because there was a big tradition coming directly from the Italians, and later the British.

What is your musical background?

I sang in choirs and joined a rock band when I hit puberty – so a very varied sort of musical upbringing! I discovered the popular classics when I was 13 or 14, and tried to educate myself very slowly. When I discovered that I could sing classical music, I took private lessons in theory and piano. My piano teacher introduced me

to my voice teacher, with whom I'm still working.

Explain the choice of repertoire on your debut disc

It reflects the things that I have done on stage, and I'm also dipping my toe into repertoire that I won't do for a very long time. But there's no harm trying, and showing the potential of where things might end up. The arias are very direct and they're not heavy: for example, 'È la solita storia' from *L'arlesiana* is mostly lightly written for the voice.

Describe your voice

I am so young that you cannot actually classify my voice yet. People label me as a lyric tenor, but of course I would like to roam around the light lyric repertoire, the *bel canto* repertoire. But of course you have *bel canto* operas where there are moments where you have full lyric, and



DECCA / MITCHELL JENKINS

The Maltese tenor is dipping his toe into future repertoire possibilities

sometimes even *lirico spinto*, like *Sonnambula*. So it's a bit misleading for people to say it's the same kind of style from note 'A' to note 'Z' in the opera.

Calleja's disc, released on May 10, is reviewed on page 92

SHOP TALK

Best sellers

HEFFERS SOUND, CAMBRIDGE

- 1 Leighton Sacred Choral Music *St John's / Robinson* Naxos
- 2 Rachmaninov Liturgy of St John Chrysostom *King's / Cleobury* EMI
- 3 Sibelius Symphonies Nos 3 & 7 *LSO / Davis* LSO Live
- 4 Couperin Keyboard Music Vol 2 *Hewitt* Hyperion
- 5 Vivaldi 12 Concerti grossi *Savall* Alia Vox

CARDIFF MUSIC

- 1 Rachmaninov Piano Concs Nos 1 & 2 *Zimmerman* DG
- 2 Mahler arr Caine *Dark Flame Caine* Winter & Winter
- 3 Verdi Simon Boccanegra *Matheson* Opera Rara
- 4 Hummel Missa solennis *Grodd* Naxos
- 5 Griffes *Pleasure Dome of Kubla Khan Falletta* Naxos

THE HILLIARD ENSEMBLE AT 30

Greater than the sum of its parts – an ensemble in profile



The Hilliards celebrate their 30th with a Wigmore weekend and a Machaut disc

Few vocal groups can be recognised within a single bar. The Hilliard Ensemble are one. Their sound is not contrived, their distinctive character having developed organically from their collective musicianship. Unmistakable is the countertenor of David James, the one remaining founding member. Another factor is consistency: just nine singers in their 30-year history.

The Hilliards will celebrate the anniversary with a weekend of concerts at the Wigmore Hall (April 30-May 1). Their beginnings,

however, were entirely unselfconscious: four London-based singers who found pleasure in singing Byrd and Tallis one to a part. Concerts were arranged, an appearance on BBC Radio 2 resulted and a recording followed. Ted Perry (pre-Hyperion) invited them to record Tudor music for Saga, reviews were favourable, and the ensemble signed with EMI.

Their status grew as the golden era of the CD market beckoned. 'The attitude was, if there's music to be recorded, let's go and do it,' says the group's tenor since the

late 1970s, Rogers Covey-Crump. The singers now admit they recorded too many CDs at that time, failing to relate the music they put down on disc to their concert work. 'Artistically, it wasn't satisfying,' recalls James.

But satisfaction was imminent. Struck by the austerity of Arvo Pärt's work, the group's then music director Paul Hillier arranged a recording of *Arbos*. The rest of the ensemble were co-operative but sceptical. Pärt attended the session, bringing along Manfred Eicher, head of ECM. The simple harmonies took off and the group sensed the beginning of something special.

When premiered in 1981, Pärt's *Passio* (his St John Passion setting) received dire reviews. His new relationship with The Hilliards changed that. A London concert garnered huge praise and an ECM disc followed. The faith shown by Eicher and the group's desire to formalise their ECM relationship coincided with EMI's decision to reduce its early music portfolio. The timing was perfect.

If meeting Pärt and Eicher was the first major turning-point in the group's fortunes, Eicher's introduction to saxophonist Jan Garbarek was the second. Their disc 'Officium', in which Garbarek improvised riffs around the singers' polyphony, attracted a whole new audience: 'One that wore black!' recalls baritone Gordon Jones.

A fundamental principle defines the group's unique blend: impeccable tuning. Without a conductor, each member takes responsibility for the overall balance, not just his own part. 'We don't look at each other,' explains James, 'we just listen.'

Recordings of Gombert and Bach motets currently loom, balanced by large-scale orchestral works: *Quickenings* by MacMillan, and new pieces by Stephen Hartke and Alexander Raskatov. Given the catalyst of the crucial partnership with Garbarek, is a search for another instrumentalist on the horizon? 'Unlikely,' says James, 'there is only one Jan Garbarek.'

It is a credit to both ECM's knowledge of its audience and The Hilliards' musicianship that they can confidently release a disc of esoteric 14th-century three- and four-part motets by Machaut. Like Gesualdo, Machaut's musical language is disconcertingly modern. 'There are extraordinary harmonies. Sometimes we could not believe what we were singing,' says James. The music's diverse ranges required that countertenor David Gould join the regular line-up. The result is a rich discovery, imbued with a unique dynamic evolved over three decades.

Matthew Power

The Hilliards perform at Wigmore Hall, April 30-May 1. See also our Machaut review, page 79

In the studio

WHO HAS RECORDED WHAT

The Berlin Philharmonic have been busy in the studios. For EMI Sir Simon Rattle and the orchestra have started a disc devoted to Dvořák's tone-poems. The first two – *The Wood Dove* and *The Golden Spinning-Wheel* – were recorded live over three concerts in the Philharmonie in early March (the other two will be recorded in the summer – and around that time, Rattle and his Berlin orchestra will also record Messiaen's *Eclairs sur l'Au-delà*...).

Same orchestra, same venue, different conductor and label. In readiness for a 2005 release to coincide with his 80th birthday, Pierre Boulez and the BPO have recorded a disc of Bartók string concertos for DG. Gidon Kremer recorded the First Violin

Concerto and Yuri Bashmet the Viola Concerto.

Hilary Hahn joined the LSO and Sir Colin Davis for a new recording, for DG, of Elgar's Violin Concerto and Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* – a coupling that brings her into direct rivalry with Nigel Kennedy's coupling.

And talking of whom, Kennedy and the BPO have followed up last year's Vivaldi *Four Seasons* with a second Vivaldi volume for EMI which, as before, features double and triple concertos with members of the orchestra.

With Deborah Voigt featuring in the magazine this month, DG reveals that it will be releasing a live account of Wagner's *Tristan*

and *Isolde* recorded at the Vienna Staatsoper last May. Voigt was the star of the performance, though a special mention must also go to the Brangäne, Petra Lang. Thomas Moser sang Tristan and Christian Thielemann conducted.

A DG disc to whet a few appetites: Martha Argerich teamed up with a long-time musical partner, Claudio Abbado and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra for Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto (the coupling will be the Second Concerto which the same team recorded a couple of years ago).

EMI's star flautist (and BPO principal – he can be heard on the Rattle Dvořák disc) Emmanuel Pahud has recorded flute transcriptions of two violin



Hilary Hahn goes British for DG

sonatas, those by Franck and Richard Strauss. Eric Le Sage accompanied.

And yet more from Berlin! The 12 Cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic have recorded a disc of film themes for EMI.

And finally, for EMI the Alban Berg Quartet have abandoned their familiar territory and recorded a disc of music by tango master Astor Piazzolla.

Giulini: 90, not out



New decade, new Verdi: a new 1964 Requiem from soon-to-be nonagenarian Giulini

Carlo Maria Giulini's name will be forever associated with the Requiem Mass by his countryman Giuseppe Verdi. His 1963 performance from the Royal Albert Hall (released on BBC Legends), and EMI studio recording, made around the same time, are vital reference points for anyone exploring performances of the work.

The Italian conductor's 90th birthday, on May 9, seems a fitting time to release another CD of the work, from a year later, at the Royal Festival Hall. The Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus are still there, but a different soloist line-up: soprano Ilva

Ligabue, mezzo Grace Bumbry, tenor Sándor Konya and bass Rafael Arie.

The recording comes from a private collection (the performance was broadcast on television), and is released by BBC Legends on May 3. It also contains the *La Forza del Destino* Overture from 1961, and an interview with Giulini by Michael Oliver. A second Giulini BBC Legend release next month offers Schubert's Symphony No 9, Weber's *Der Freischütz* Overture and Britten's *The Building of the House* Overture.

From all of us at Gramophone, Happy Birthday Maestro!

Sales up - but of what?

Classical music sales rose by 8 per cent last year, to a value of £64.9m.

The increase, announced by the UK record industry trade association, the BPI, beat total album sales across all genres, which increased by only 2.1 per cent.

However, before readers get too excited by the prospect of a popular renaissance in Byrd, Bartók or Berio, the sales chart was dominated by crossover titles, which took up all the places in the top 20.

Hayley Westenra's album 'Pure' was the highest selling disc in the sector, followed by Bryn Terfel's platinum-selling 'Bryn'. Andrea Bocelli, Aled Jones and Amici forever also featured in the top 10, along with five compilations packaging classics as relaxation and chill-out music.

BPI chairman Peter Jamieson described the year's offerings as

'a range of exciting artists and innovative compilations which brought classical music to new audiences.'

'The record industry invests heavily in the standard classical repertoire,' he added, 'with new recordings of the best contemporary conductors and performers; the success of the UK classical record industry lies in this symbiotic relationship between the crossover and traditional classical markets.'

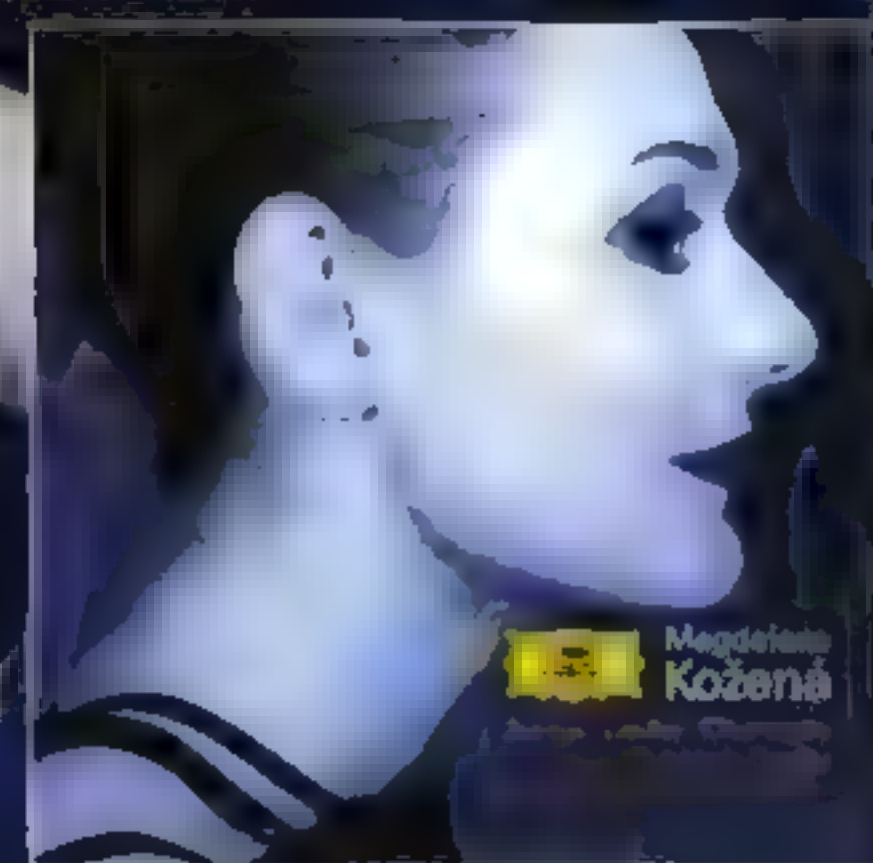
Not everyone is convinced by the link. Ralph Couzens, managing director of Chandos Records, said: 'I wouldn't say there's been a knock-on effect from any crossover product. Any increase we've seen is purely because we've had good products.'

'Overall it was an encouraging year,' he said, in which Chandos saw increased sales in some territories, including the UK. 'But it's still a hard place out there.'

Magdalena Kožená

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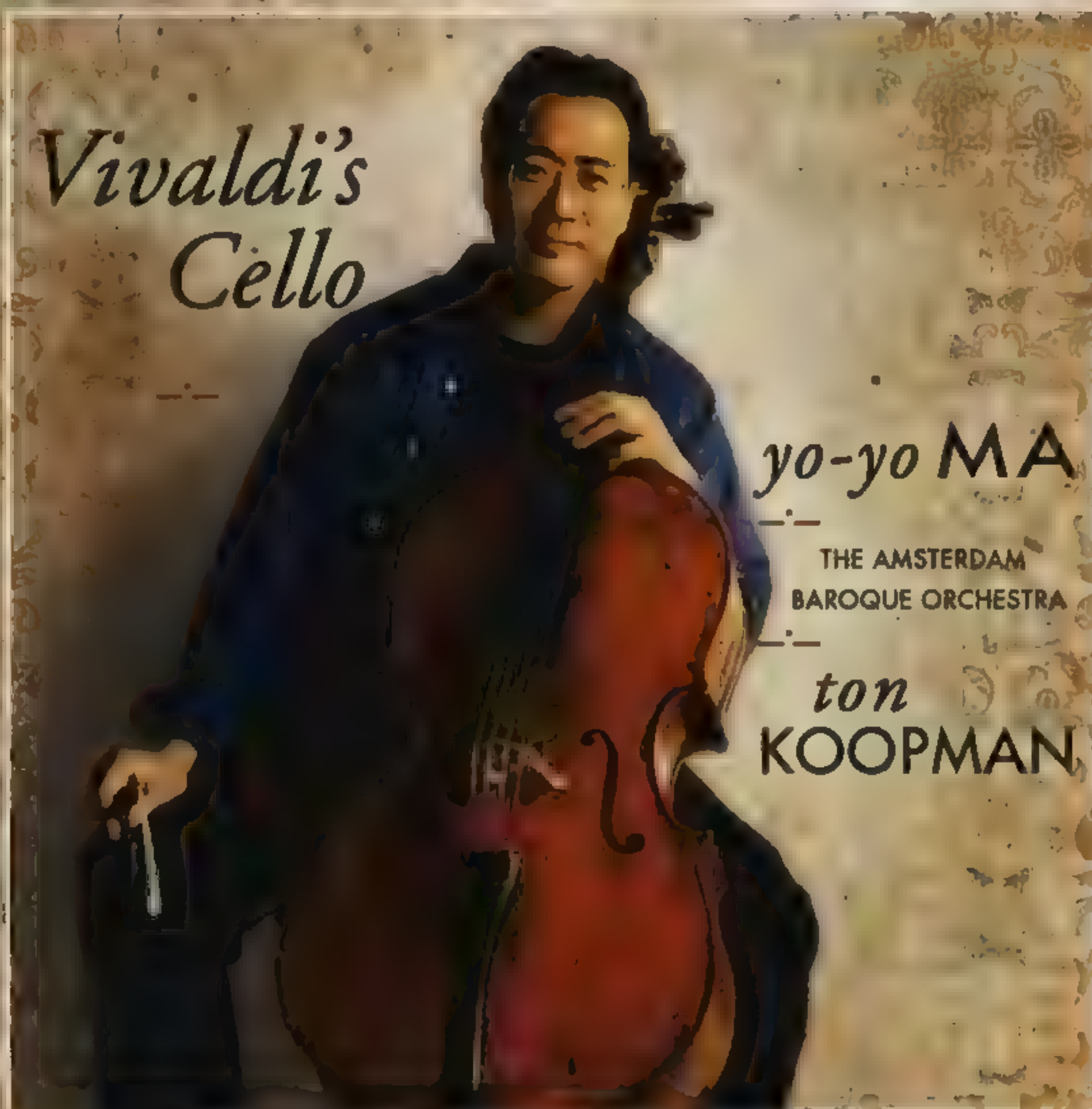
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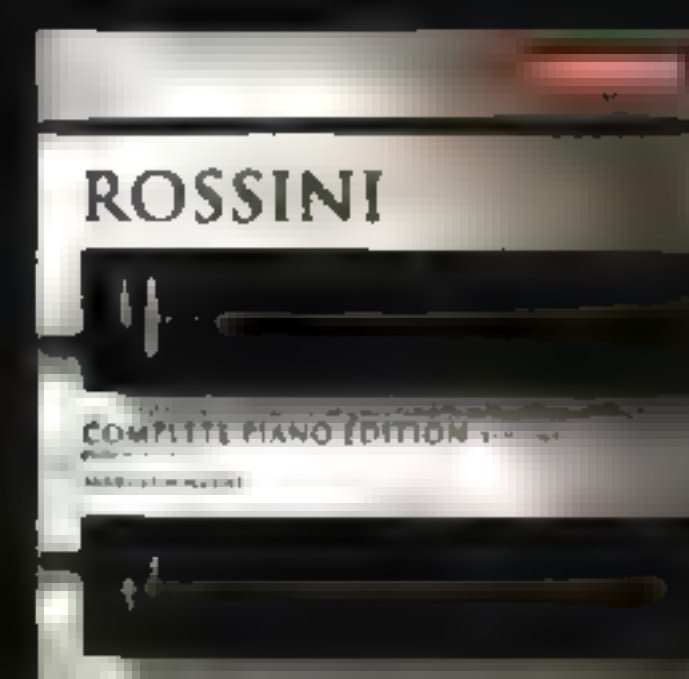
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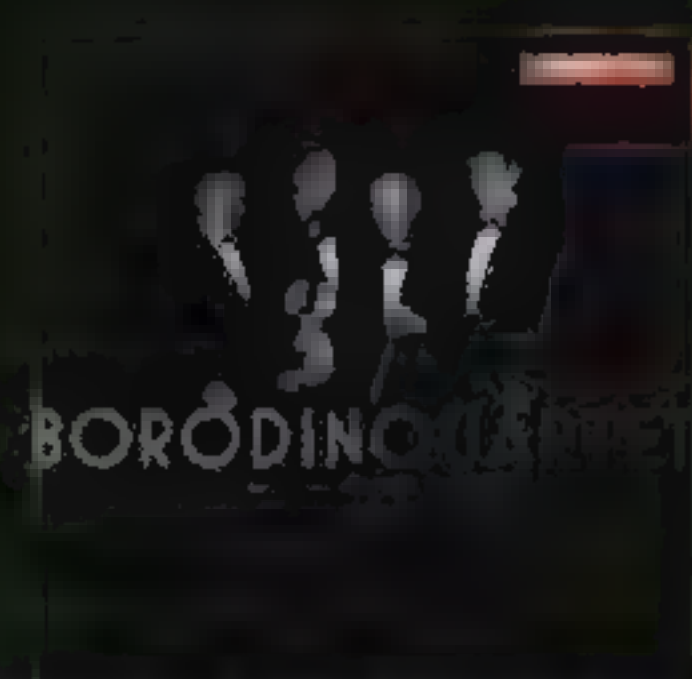
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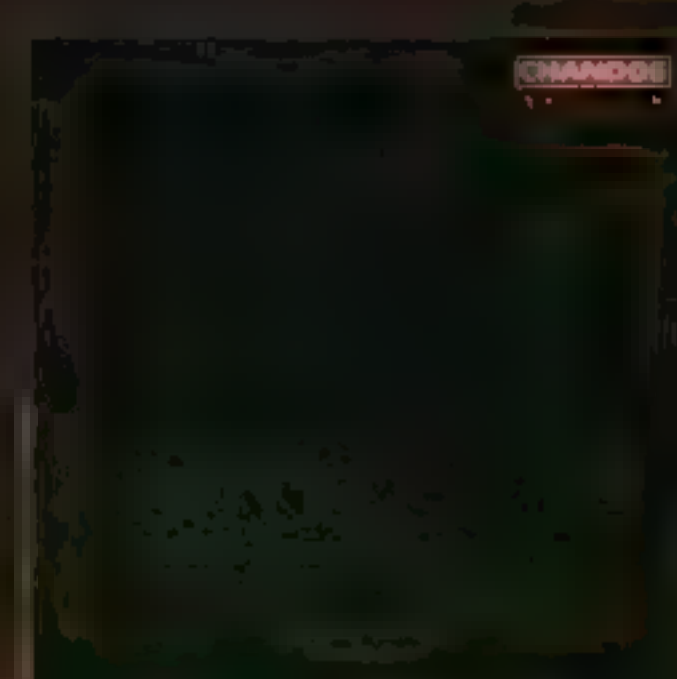
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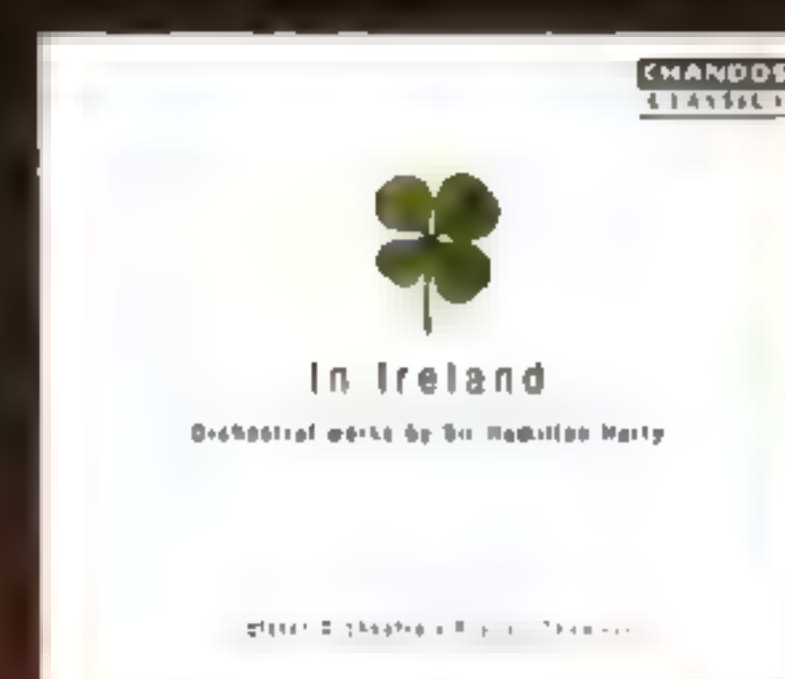
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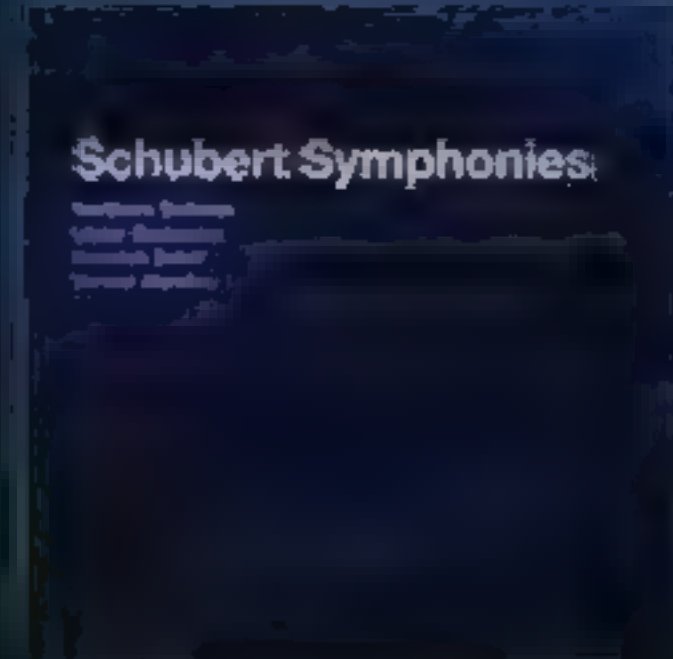
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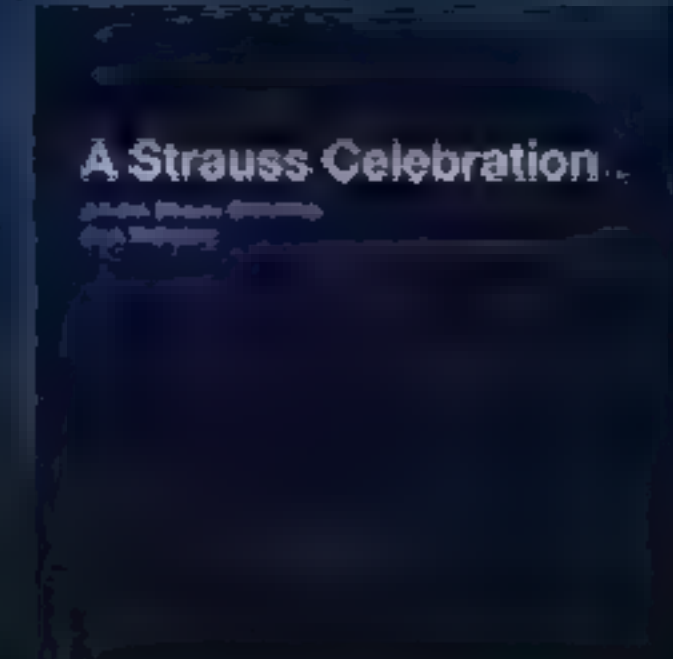
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FROM WHERE I SIT

Timothy Walker

The London Philharmonic Orchestra's chief executive and artistic director offers some perspective from Australia

One of the observations you can make when you come to London from the outside, as I have (although I know the city very well) is that this is a city that is particularly well-served for very good opera venues, especially now that the Royal Opera House and Coliseum have been refurbished. Dance is also reasonably served – because of the opera houses again, and Sadler's Wells – and where the city really comes into its own is its huge number of art galleries and their magnificently-housed collections – the National Gallery, the V&A, the National Portrait Gallery, the Tate and so on. Equally, you can see that the Arts Council has done an excellent job in stabilising the city's orchestras, but what it hasn't done so well is provide venues for them. The pressing artistic problem for London is the lack of provision of first-class concert halls.

In London, we have a situation where we've got five great symphony orchestras all in the one city but no great concert venue. Some of the UK's regional cities have fared much better in this regard – Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Cardiff, even Edinburgh, all have better concert halls than London. But in the capital it seems clear that the passion for opera and the passion for art collections has been more strongly argued and pushed than the passion for concert halls.

Arguably the music capital of the world because of the concentration of orchestras in the city and everything else that happens here, London is not well served for venues. It's embarrassing. And it's all the more pressing with the imminent redevelopment of the South Bank Centre (SBC), which directly affects my own orchestra, the London Philharmonic.

The model for the SBC, the collection of various 'art spaces', was probably right for its time. For today, I'm not so sure. What the SBC has to do is assert its position as London's premier music venue, and I mean music in all its manifestations, but importantly as *the* serious classical music venue in the city. I don't think it needs to be a one-stop-shop arts centre doing everything for everyone. London is that already. It needs, instead, to assert that the Royal Festival Hall is our Concertgebouw, our Musikverein, our Carnegie Hall.

In this redevelopment the SBC is working very hard on the magic within the hall, on the platform and in the front-of-house, but it's not taking into account another part of the equation. I don't think it's reasonable to spend £17 million on upgrading a venue for the public if the artists are left with a green room which has no room for them. In the redevelopment of Covent Garden and the Coliseum the artists were considered but here I don't think the artists are being given due regard.

Because what matters is what happens on stage, we've got to try to manage all the component elements that make the performance the best it possibly can be. So consideration of the conditions the musicians work in, on and off the platform, is vital. One of the ways to achieve the incremental development of the artistic standards of any orchestra is to provide better facilities for it to work in. We're not achieving that at the moment: it's not healthy for musicians to be forced to walk around London in between rehearsal and performance because that's the only option available to them. It's an embarrassment for visiting orchestras but they leave the next day. The real concern is for the people who are



JOE DILWORTH

giving concerts night after night after night: you can't expect them to be giving of their best if the facilities are second-rate.

The first meeting I had regarding development, I pushed for the fact that the £17 million should not just be spent on the public areas and the hall's interior, it needed to extend to the backstage areas. Unfortunately only £1 million is ear-marked for that. Of course we need the building redone, but it's what happens in the building that's important. With the land adjacent to the South Bank Centre, my view would be to build a state-of-the-art concert hall which is worthy of a city with five symphony orchestras. Bear in mind that New York has one orchestra. And yet it has two major venues.

'I would build a state-of-the-art concert hall which is worthy of a city with five symphony orchestras'

If I suggested now that we should go for a new concert hall, that would compromise the fight to have the RFH at least upgraded. But I did make that comment to Honor Chapman, Chair of the London Development Agency, and I got a favourable response in the sense that she said we should be thinking about it. I don't want to scupper all the effort that's gone into something I hope is going to be achievable, but I don't understand why, in this instance, the Arts Council would put so much money into stabilising the orchestras and then leave us in a position for 18 months where we don't have anywhere to play. We'll have the 900-seat Queen Elizabeth Hall but the box-office income is a quarter of Royal Festival Hall and the stage is smaller so we have to programme differently, too. The prospect of having a temporary concert hall of 2200 seats built on the carpark next to SBC, albeit for £6 million, seemed to me to be a sensible option for the closure period with the possibility of moving that structure to wherever else it was needed or useful at the end of the 18-month period. I don't think that was ever looked into with the sort of rigour it should have been.

There's enough history now of closures to see the pattern, and the pattern is that the audience doesn't go with the company: it didn't, for example, follow the Royal Opera House to Hammersmith or the Royal Court Theatre into the West End. The evidence is that the audience is very site-specific. That's to do with the difficulty in travelling in London and the fact that audiences respond primarily to programme. In our case, audiences don't choose between the playing styles and programmes of the LSO and the LPO; they chose between the accessibility of the Barbican and the RFH.

The worry is that if the perception of the SBC as a viable venue falls away, audiences will get used to it not being there. Which is why I find the failure to build the temporary concert hall during closure such a devastating decision because within 18 months, we may well find that the pattern of activity of audiences attending LPO concerts at RFH is broken. To be put in this hugely destabilising position during this stabilisation period is a very odd bit of planning. Let's be realistic: people's 'habits' do change. And quickly. ●

For details of the LPO's 2003/04 season, visit www.lpo.co.uk

JOHN STEANE SINGERTALK



Tantalising glimpses of the Russian operatic tradition – all we need now is some context

Video Artists International have brought out a fascinating pair of DVDs called 'The Great Singers of Russia'. These are Russian-made documentary films, dated 1998 and issued in two volumes: 'From Chaliapin to Reizen' and 'From Petrov to Kazarnovskaya'. That last name may require a footnote: she is Mistress of Ceremonies, a smiling, well turned-out soprano who supplies a commentary in clear English (though with voluptuous talk of 'voices'), and she is also, in Volume 2, shown extensively (more so than anybody else) singing in three operatic roles. It is possible that something has got out of proportion here; possible also that Ivan Petrov, leading bass as he was for many years at the Bolshoi, owes something of his prominence to his role as second commentator (but in Russian). These two appear with singers as modern as Borodina and Hvorostovsky, and certainly this second disc is interesting in several ways.

It includes, for instance, five or six minutes of what I said to be all that remains in Russia of Galina Vishnevskaya's 20 years as first lady of the Bolshoi. When she and Rostropovich left the Soviet Union in 1974 they became non-persons: all traceable records were systematically destroyed, and, according to the narration, this clip from Aida's 'Ritorna vincitor' is therefore a super-rarity. It preserves the stylised, angular Egyptian gestures (presumably Ethiopian, too) which she brought with her to Covent Garden. She was evidently ahead of her time: obtrusive in the Wallmann production, they might have fitted in quite well with the Robert Wilson. There is also included here a hair-raising performance of the finale to *Carmen* by Irena Arkhipova and Mario del Monaco, he singing in Italian to her Russian. The sound-recording has been well-known for some years and I had always found it good only as comedy. Seen, del Monaco's José is so patently sincere it compels a kind of wonder.

But the value of these issues lies essentially in Volume 1. Though the programme begins with Chaliapin and a scene from his sound-film of *Don Quixote*, some of the earliest footage derives from the days of silent film. One track shows the great Leonid Sobinov, Russia's favourite tenor from Tsarist times, receiving honours from the new regime. His last studio recordings date from 1911, and here he is as 'People's Artist of the Republic' in a vivid piece of newsreel. His successor, Ivan Kozlovsky, is also seen in a few minutes of silent film – called a screen-test, though heaven knows what it was supposed to test as all he does is stand and every now and then give a sickly smile. Happily, he is filmed in sound, too, on his own in 'La donna è mobile' (cadenza to C sharp) and *Boris Godunov* (the Simpleton's face irradiated with childlike cunning), and also in company. One companion in duet is the distinguished mezzo, Nadezhda Obukhova: apparently her only appearance in film and within months of her death. Kozlovsky sings also with Paul Robeson, magnificently taking over the function of what the Russians call the 'octavist' bass, a national speciality illustrated earlier by a male-voice choir in which the source of this subterranean rumble is identified as a little man who hardly opens his mouth. Kozlovsky's final appearance is on stage at the Bolshoi when his 60 years as a singer are celebrated along with his 80th birthday.



COURTESY OF VAI RECORDS

Ivan Koskowsky's ringing tenor is a highlight of VAI's pair of documentaries: with Nadezhda Obukova (top) and with Paul Robeson (above)

And in that line more astonishing still, and indeed unforgettable, is the upright figure of the purest singer among Russian basses, Mark Reizen, singing the role of Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*, also at the Bolshoi, at the age of 90. In the last notes of all, during that fearsome descent to the low G flat, his voice becomes husky; otherwise the complete master, tone and style patrician as ever.

There is all this and (as the advertisements would say) 'much much more'. Why, however, having such a wealth of material, does whoever is responsible not bother to present it properly? The decorative Ljuba Kazarnovskaya tells us how grand is the tradition, and Ivan Petrov marvels wide-eyed at the greatness of its exponents. But they're not very good at more prosaic matters of fact, such as dates. Exactly when and where (for instance) was Sobinov filmed? What exactly were Kozlovsky and Robeson singing (it's a folk-song called *Night*, but they don't tell us)? They also show a startling excerpt from Eisenstein's film *Ivan the Terrible* where a sumptuously-clad priest with the face of a butcher begins to chant on a low note rising with manic intensity by more or less 14 semitones while a boy-king and bowed congregation wait. The singer, Maxim Mikhailov, is named, but nothing is said about context (Coronation scene, Part 1), date (1946) or role (Archdeacon according to the film books, though that sounds improbably Trollopian). Vapid enthusiasm is no substitute for accurate information.

'Seen, Mario del Monaco's José is so patently sincere it compels a kind of wonder'

These are, of course, celebratory issues and if they were every now and then to hint at possible faults or limitations maybe that would jar. Certainly they could not be expected to cast doubts upon the achievements of recent years. But those prize exports of the 1970s – Obraztsova, Mazurok and Nesterenko – how splendidly their voices project but how devoid of imagination and subtlety their singing is as represented here. And, of our own day, Borodina: how well she manages the notes of 'Una voce poco fa' but how devoid of charm and nuance is this busily peripatetic Rosina.

What we really need is a scholarly, critical commentary to accompany so much valuable cinematic material: not only for the Russians, but for all those famous singers who are caught, however fleetingly, on film. General surveys, such as Richard Fawkes's *Opera on Film* (Duckworth: 2000) and archive material (some catalogued in the *Music Reference Collection*, Greenwood Press, and much that is well-organised, I believe, in Paris) are there for consultation. Meanwhile we must accept the lovely Ljuba, ineffable smiles and all, and be thankful. ©

The Great Singers of Russia, Volume 1 (DVD4257: 75 minutes) and Volume 2 (DVD4258: 94 minutes) are on the VAI label. Picture 4:3, Sound PCM mono & stereo, Region 0.

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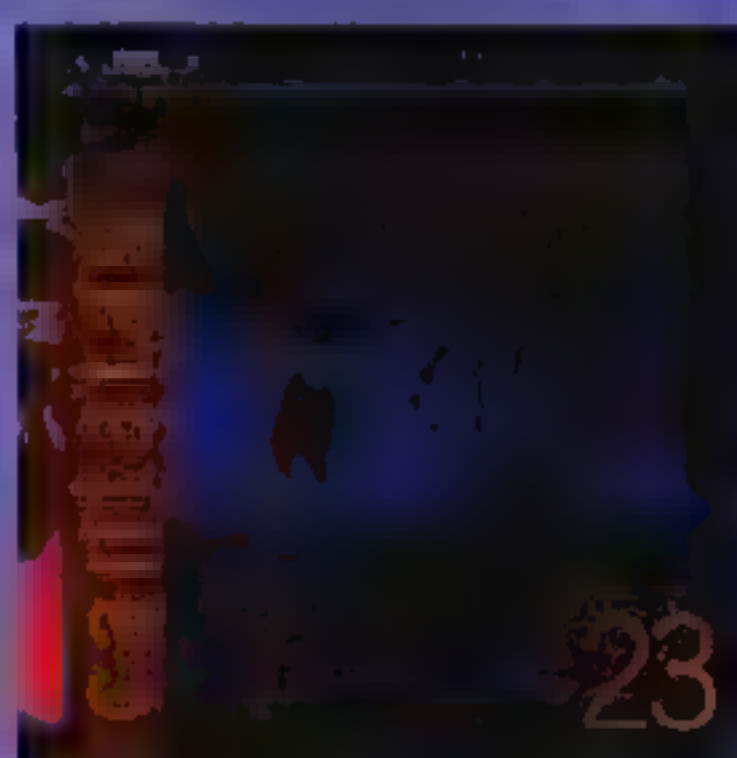
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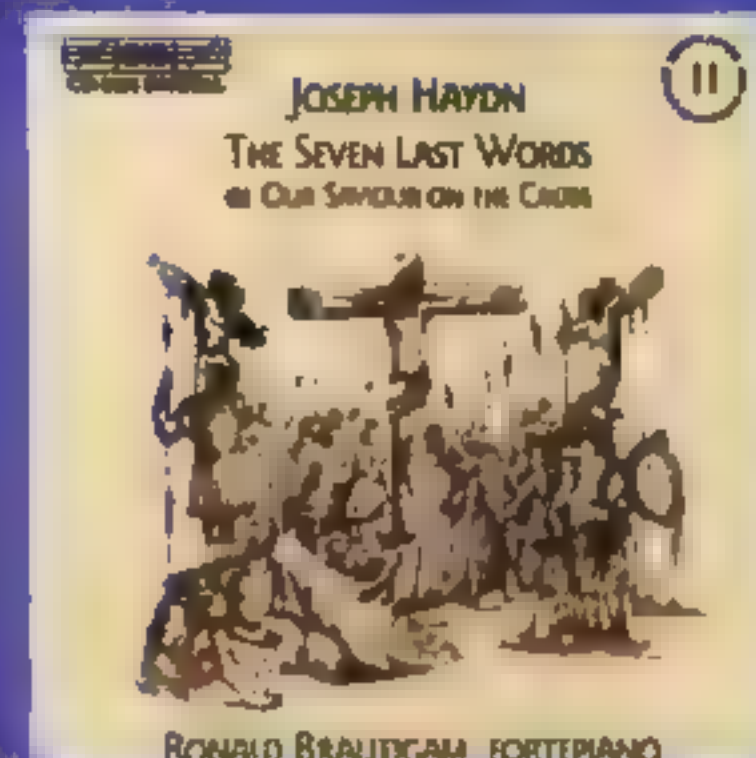
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LETTER OF THE MONTH

this, and here's why we want to play it for you!' It immediately creates a relationship between the platform and the audience who love them for it, especially those who arrived less than fully clued-up. They especially can be mightily relieved by such a small gesture and are much more likely to be open to a new musical experience, and to come back another day.

Some of the audience have come to hear a particular piece but may not know the rest of the programme. Others are there to hear the artist whose playing or voice got them interested, but they may not know the works for that evening. There are (one hopes!) first-timers in every audience: young, tentative, interested enough to have got themselves there but they'd appreciate a little help. This is a particular problem with new music but it applies equally to the song repertoire.

If it's Beethoven's Fifth, it's a fair bet that most of the audience will know something about what they're hearing, although surely the conductor has one fresh

insight (or why bother?) that the audience would like to hear about? Scholarship constantly throws up new information, and snippets even interest – or even especially interest – experienced concert-goers. A short, general introduction, maybe an anecdote about the composer or the performance of the piece, welcomes the audience and settles them down. It focuses their attention and encourages them to give the performers a fair hearing even with complex and difficult music. If the conductor raises a quiet chuckle, even better.

Accessibility is the word whenever the future of the classical audience is discussed. The solution is not to dumb down or resort to crossover, but to explain and open up the immense riches of the musical world to those who are discovering it for the first time, or would if anyone would give them a hand. Conductors and recitalists who behave as though it's only the cognoscenti who are worthy of their attention have only themselves to blame if their audience dwindles. If they don't do their bit

to help newcomers, to either the concert hall or the repertoire, there won't be a next generation of cognoscenti to snuggle up to. And eventually, no sponsors, either – they'll put their money into whatever the audience is doing instead of coming to concerts.

Music may be intensely moving and important stuff, but a concert is also show business, folks, and no-one understood better than the greatest composers that it's important to know your audience.

JILL GUNSELL
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Talking conductors

Why don't more conductors and recitalists speak to the audience at concerts? A few words of introduction or explanation enhance most performances out of all proportion to the effort and time it takes. There are some who regularly do it – and entirely without condescension. 'You're really going to enjoy

Tall Toscas

Patrick O'Connor's Take Five column in March comments on Susan Graham's song lamenting being six feet and too tall to play Tosca. The creator of Tosca in London (1900) and New York (1901) was the six-foot Croatian soprano Milka Ternina who Puccini always said was the greatest of all Toscas. According to the American baritone David Bispham, 'Ternina had a majestic appearance, splendid voice and great acting power'.

At the old Met Opera House in New York on March 9, 1963 for a performance of *Tristan und Isolde* starring the excellent Birgit Nilsson, I sat next to a 90-year-old man who first saw the opera in 1896 with the small, emotional mezzo Katharina Klafsky as Isolde. For him the best performance of the opera was on March 13, 1901 with Ternina and with

Jean De Reszke as Tristan in his final New York season. Both were six foot tall and good-looking. He said Ternina had a beautiful, mellow, warm voice. De Reszke's voice was less impressive, though he was the most artistic and musically robust tenor of his day. The old man later heard the four cylinders that Mapleson recorded from the Act 2 love duet of *Tristan*.

Periodically Ternina suffered from a face-twitching 'tic' which prevented her singing. This problem forced her to retire in 1906, aged 42, to her house in the Bavarian Alps. After the First World War Ternina returned to Zagreb where she taught Zinka Milanov and died there in 1941. It seems she never made studio recordings.

Ternina was a longtime friend of the German princess who became Alexandra, the last Tsarina of Imperial Russia.

D DAVID
BY E-MAIL

Strauss and the oboe

I read with great interest the further informative contribution by Bernard Sherman (April, page 22) to the correspondence about the origins of Richard Strauss's Oboe Concerto, particularly the politics surrounding its performance in America. I would, however, take up Mr Sherman on one point.

This is his surmise that in making alterations to the concerto 'de Lancie concluded that oboists know more than Strauss about the properties of their instrument'. This is clearly not correct. In its winter 2002 issue, *Double Reed News* (the journal of the British Double Reed Society) published my translation of a fascinating article by the German oboist and scholar Christian Schneider concerning his illustrious predecessor Fritz Flemming.

Flemming (1873–1947) was the first German oboe player to take up the French style. He studied in



Richard Strauss: knew his oboes

Paris with Gillet, and in 1897 was appointed solo oboe of the Royal Opera Orchestra in Berlin at the age of 24. A few months later in 1898 one Richard Strauss was appointed conductor at the Royal Opera. Strauss was an enthusiastic campaigner for the French oboe and worked intimately with

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OPINION

Flemming for the next 20 years, constantly consulting him on technical and musical matters concerning the oboe, developing new oboe effects jointly with him, and giving him all manner of encouragement and preferment. This even extended to Strauss's frequently taking Fleming with him when he conducted other orchestras in other cities, and one can rather easily guess at the impact that must have had on Fleming's orchestral colleagues! Further, Fleming married Strauss's niece so there was a continuing family connection. So whatever technical and musical reasons John de Lancie may have had for wanting to make changes to the solo part in Strauss's concerto as published, it was certainly not because Strauss himself had lacked technical knowledge about the oboe.

MICHAEL JOHNSON
LONDON, UK

phonie fantastique in 1972 and Ravel's *Boléro* in 1977. About 14 years ago, I spent a day with him at his home just outside Norwich, looking back on his career and recording his memories of the many famous artists with whom he had worked, and their idiosyncrasies. This was later transcribed and published in a US magazine. One anecdote will suffice. The conductor Stokowski was notorious for wanting to balance his recordings himself. 'Of course, maestro,' Wilkie responded, 'I take it you won't mind if I come out and try my hand at conducting?'

REG WILLIAMSON
VIA E-MAIL

Visual proof

In his review (April 2004, page 105) of Geoffrey Block's *Richard Rodgers* (Yale University Press: 2003), Adrian Edwards refers to Block commenting on 'the growing number of recent critics and historians expressing more positive assessments of the Rodgers-Sondheim collaboration *Do I Hear a Waltz?*, which in the absence of a stage production, must have been made from listening to the Original Broadway Cast recording'.

Having myself expressed such an assessment, both in my *150 Years of Popular Musical Theatre* (Yale University Press: 2000) and even more strongly in the pages of *Gramophone* itself (January 2002, page 103), I am anxious to stress that my view is not based solely on the original cast album but also on the 1992 Guildhall School of Music & Drama production.

ANDREW LAMB
CROYDON, UK

Classical popularity

I'm not so sure that I agree with the letters from Philip Constantine (February) and Rudi Werth (April), concerning untimely applause.

I was at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall last week to hear The Tallis Scholars perform an all-Byrd programme to a packed hall. This would have been unimaginable even 20 years ago. And, yes, a good proportion of the audience applauded after the *Gloria* of the Mass for five voices, and again after the *Credo*. I found this good news rather than bad news: this was an example of CD recordings attracting a new audience to music that has only relatively recently found its way to the concert hall rather than the cathedral. I would rather have this form of applause and a packed house than a scattering of cognoscenti applauding in the correct places. What would Messrs Werth and Constantine prefer?

MARK FLINN
CHORLEY, UK

Editorial notes

James Jolly writes: My thanks to those people who wrote *à propos* my article on Dame Kiri Te Kanawa last month, that she did indeed sing Elisabeth de Valois in Verdi's *Don Carlo* at Lyric Opera Chicago; it seems that this was a one-off.

We are advised that the box set of archive recordings featuring the Royal Stockholm PO (reviewed in *Replay* last month, page 100) is *not* available through IMG. Full purchase details can be found at www.konserthuset.se or by phone/fax on (+46) 8 786 02 00 / (+46) 8 50 66 77 89.

The Editor does not necessarily agree with any views expressed in letters printed, and reserves the right to edit correspondence where necessary. Letters received by e-mail should include the postal address

Kenneth Wilkinson

Rarely can one describe someone as a legend in his or her own lifetime, but it would certainly apply to Decca's recording engineer, Ken Wilkinson (Obituary, April, page 14). 'Wilkie' was respected by his peers and even more important, enjoyed the complete trust of the artists he served with his craft. Paradoxically, his skills were recognised more in the USA than in the UK, where he won the prestigious National Academy of Recorded Art and Sciences Award twice; the first for Berlioz' *Sym-*

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'HE'S A SERIOUSLY FUNNY GUY'

One million CDs of Beethoven later, David Zinman turns his wit and wisdom to Schumann. Andrew Farach-Colton meets the unassuming maestro

An orchestra is only as good as its conductor, the saying goes – and surely there's a grain of truth to that, though there are exceptions. Take Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra, for example. Founded in 1868, the Tonhalle

is Switzerland's oldest symphonic outfit and has employed a number of distinguished music directors, including Volkmar Andreae, Hans Rosbaud, Rudolf Kempe and Christoph Eschenbach. Yet it is really only in the past decade, under the leadership of David Zinman, that the orchestra has gained international recognition as a virtuoso ensemble.

Zinman himself, curiously enough, has been similarly undervalued. The American conductor's relatively low profile is due in part to his studiously unflamboyant and sometimes even self-deprecating personality, as well as to the fact that his long-term musical relationships have been based in smaller cities – Rotterdam, Rochester, Baltimore and now Zurich – though he regularly conducts in Berlin, London, New York and other cultural capitals. I was living in Baltimore during the first four years of Zinman's tenure with the Baltimore Symphony, and I can report that his abilities as an orchestra builder are very impressive indeed. One can hear the results for oneself, as the excellence of the Baltimoreans' playing under Zinman's direction is amply documented in recordings made for Telarc and Argo. What's especially telling, however, is how similar the attractively lean, finely focused sound of today's Tonhalle Orchestra is to that of the Baltimore Symphony of the late 1980s and early '90s.

Zinman arrived in Zurich in 1995, taking over from Claus Peter Flor, and says that he found the orchestra in good shape. 'Yet there was something that hadn't quite clicked with them. What I found out quite early on was that they lacked confidence. Once they gained that self-confidence, and could let themselves go, they became a different orchestra.' How does one instill self-confidence in such a large and diverse band of musicians? 'You give them the feeling that you're with them rather than against them. If something goes wrong at a rehearsal or in a concert, you say, "Well, okay, it happened, but I think we can do this."

(And I always use "we" rather than saying, "I want this", or "you have to do this".) Once they get the feeling that they can relax and play, and be encouraged as musicians – which is the most important thing – then really good things begin to happen.'

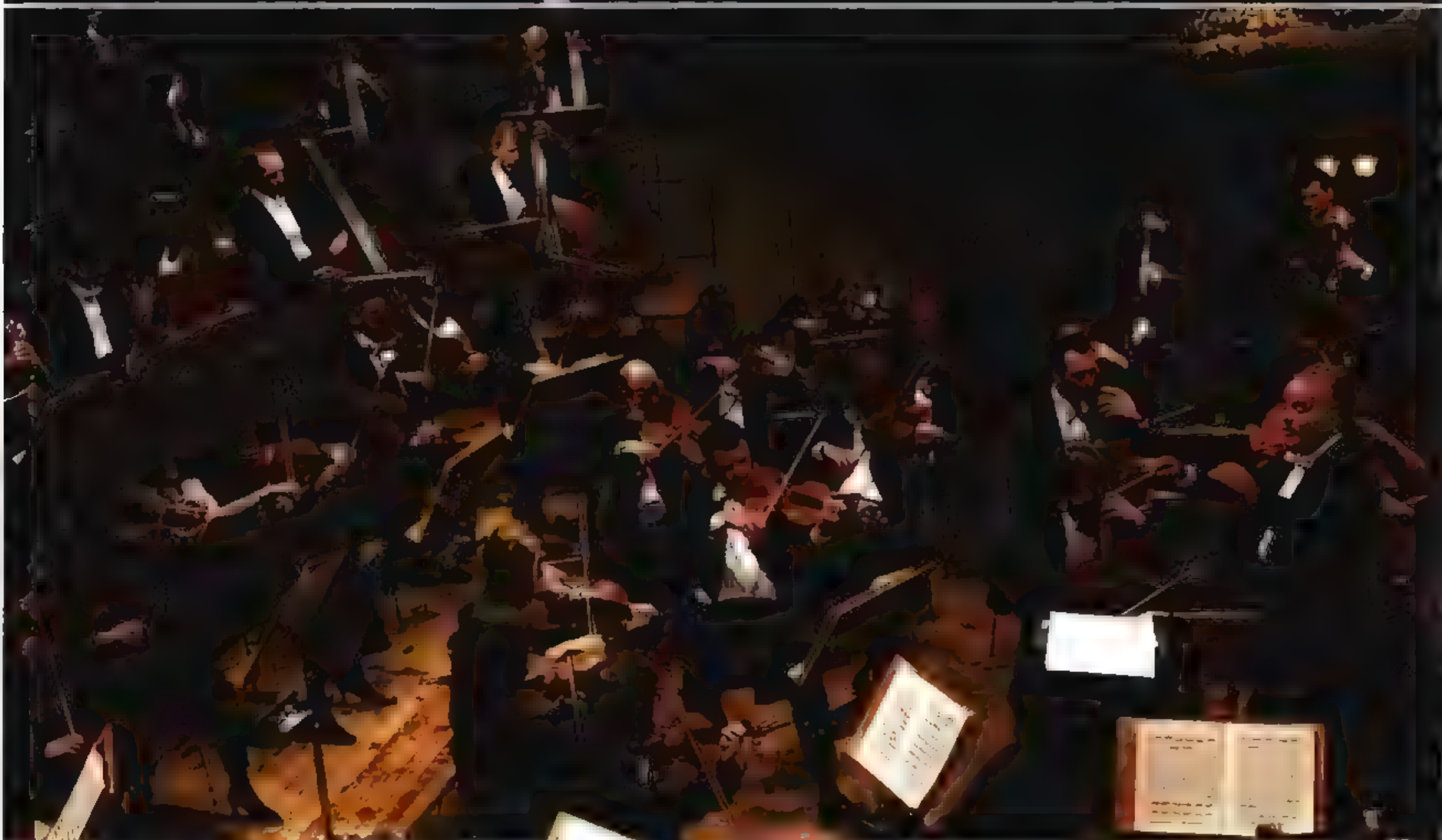
Tours were another confidence booster. Zinman took the orchestra to Germany in 1996, then around Europe the following season. 'It was really important that the first tours were successful because they served as reinforcement. I had been telling them that they were a very good orchestra, and now suddenly the critics in Berlin and Vienna and Amsterdam were saying the same thing.' Tours of the US and Japan followed. 'Then we started making recordings.'

Zinman and the Tonhalle Orchestra's first disc together, devoted to the music of Arthur Honegger, was recorded for Decca in May 1996, during the conductor's second season. It was praised by Robert Layton in these pages, who made special note of the orchestra's 'responsive and sensitive playing'. What really put the orchestra on the map, however, was a cycle of the Beethoven symphonies released several years later by the budget label Arte Nova. Indeed, including the *Missa solemnis*, Zinman's Beethoven has sold over one million CDs – an exceptionally large number for classical recordings. The unexpected critical and commercial success of these discs allowed the Tonhalle to ramp up their recording schedule when most other orchestras were cutting back. It was this achievement, Zinman says, that gave the orchestra a special sense of pride.

It is clearly not just the budget price that made Zinman's Beethoven recordings so appealing, but their strong sense of interpretative freshness. 'Swift, lean, invigorating and transparent,' wrote Rob Cowan in the original *Gramophone* review, adding that 'the Tonhalle copes bravely, often with exceptional skill.' Zinman's approach to Beethoven is shaped in part by the period instrument movement – though one imagines his teacher Pierre Monteux was also a major influence – and has developed considerably over the years. I heard him conduct several Beethoven symphonies in Baltimore back in the late 1980s in which he tried to respect the composer's metronome markings, but the result was not so much exciting as hard-driven and inflexible. The Tonhalle recordings, on the other hand, are full of charm and suppleness – Zinman has clearly found a way to make the dangerously fast metronome marks work. What I find most valuable in his Beethoven interpretations, though, is their wit – a facet of this music that is all too rarely realised. 'There is a tremendous amount of fun in Beethoven,' Zinman says, and as an example, he sings



"There's that old saw that Schumann's music is muddy and boring, but if you use a small enough orchestra' says David Zinman, with the Tonhalle Orchestra below, 'then one finds the excitement in the sound.'



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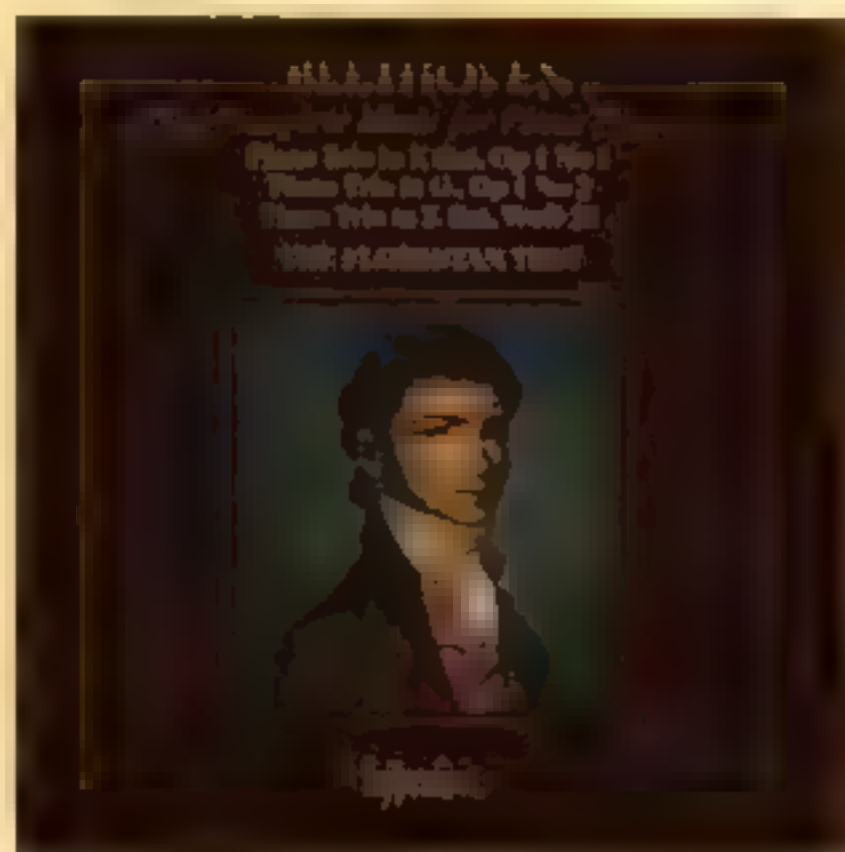
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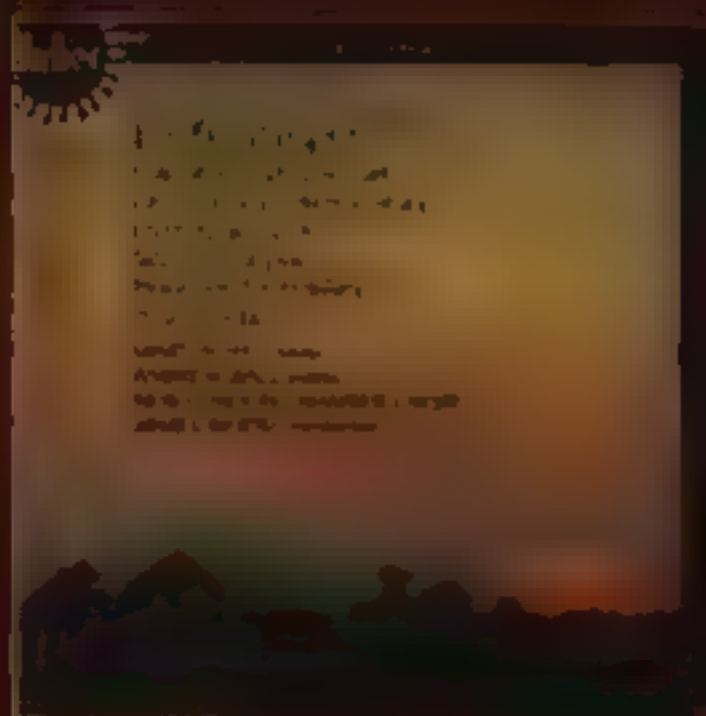


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As David Zinman nears the 10th anniversary of his Tonhalle tenure, he doesn't, he insists, 'want to be one of those guys who doesn't take a stand'

DAVID ZINMAN IN THE TONHALL

Beethoven Symphonies Nos 5 & 6

Arte Nova © 74321 49695-2

'I would strongly recommend this CD to readers who know their Klemperers, their Toscaninis and their Furtwänglers backwards, who fancy investigating some scholarly emendations but who dislike period-instrument sonorities. Come to think of it, even the period-instrument brigade stand to learn a thing or two.'

Rob Cowan (12/97)

Beethoven Symphonies Nos 3, 'Eroica' & 4

Arte Nova © 74321 59214-2

'Zinman's account of the Fourth Symphony is fleet and mercurial, as compelling a case as we have for honouring Beethoven's fast metronome markings and, in the finale, bursting with unforced vitality... Viewed as a whole, Zinman's *Eroica* levels with various up-tempo period-instrument alternatives.'

Rob Cowan (2/99)

Ibert, Khachaturian Flute Concertos with Emmanuel Pahud

EMI © 557563-2

'What sets Pahud's performance apart is the depth of feeling he conveys in the slow movement: poignantly mysterious, with breathtaking *pianissimi* matched by the strings of the Tonhalle Orchestra under David Zinman.'

Edward Greenfield (11/03)

the horn part of the Second Symphony's *Scherzo*, holding his nose on every other note to indicate the way it sounds on 18th century instruments. 'He's clearly using the horns to comic effect here, and it's kind of nutty.' The conductor is, in fact, a seriously funny guy – quick-witted and armed with an arsenal of long-accumulated shtick. It's not at all surprising to learn that he did stand-up comedy during his college days.

Zinman's interest in period practice is rooted in his training, which emphasised zealous adherence to the composer's wishes, and affects every aspect of his craft. When I asked him to describe his ideal orchestral sound, for example, he told me that the sound simply needs to be appropriate to the style. 'I don't want to play Schumann or Beethoven in the same way I play Strauss and Rachmaninov. I know some musicians who believe that giving the imprint of their own personality in an interpretation is the most important thing. I believe that the composer's personality is the most important. So, if the music needs to be incredibly lush, I try to make it incredibly lush, and when it has to be dry, it's dry.' Zinman's instrument was the violin, and he was reportedly a fine player. 'I studied composition, too, so when I study a score, I try to understand why the composer wrote the notes – what inspired him to write them.' The conductor's analytic abilities are no secret, apparently. After playing three contemporary cello concertos with Zinman and the New York Philharmonic last season, Yo-Yo Ma told me: 'David knows these complex scores unbelievably well. He does such an intensive analysis that he almost "owns" the works, as if he wrote them himself. And that's the way he approaches every piece of music.'

The way Zinman explains it, it is the possibility of making new discoveries, even in the most familiar works, that makes his job worthwhile. Schumann, for instance, has figured prominently in his repertory for several decades. As with Beethoven, though, Zinman's understanding of Schumann is constantly evolving, and newly released recordings of the symphonies (Arte Nova) should be markedly different from those recorded for Telarc in Baltimore in 1989. 'There's that old saw that Schumann's orchestration is muddy and boring, but if you use a small enough orchestra so that the winds can come through without being doubled, and if you encourage the strings to use less vibrato and give the tremolos a kind of sizzle, then one finds the excitement in the sound.'

The orchestra uses period brass instruments, which also helps to create transparency, and the hard thwack of period timpani adds jolts of energy.

This time around, he's taking Schumann's metronome markings seriously, too. 'Alfred Brendel doesn't believe in them, but I do. They're inspiring because they give you a feeling for what Schumann must have wanted. To play the second movement of the *Rhenish* at [crotchet =] 100, you realise that the music is not in the mud of the Rhine, so to speak, but actually very flowing. The one movement where I sometimes miss a slower tempo is the third, which is quite fast; one has to find a way to make it work. The finale of the *Rhenish* is also really fast but immensely exciting that way. Now, when I listen to my old recordings, I wonder how I could have been so dull. I'm sure some critics will say that the performances lack depth or that the tempos are simply insane, but I think it's important to bring out the music's obsessive, manic qualities. Schumann is all about obsession and longing.'

Between the Beethoven and Schumann sets, Zinman and the orchestra embarked on an epic traversal of Richard Strauss orchestral music – seven discs' worth. The orchestra has its own, strong Straussian tradition, he says, thanks not only to Rudolf Kempe's directorship (1965–72), but also to the composer himself, who was a frequent guest conductor in Zurich. With such an impressive legacy, was there room for a fresh approach? Did Zinman take any inspiration from Strauss's own recordings, for example? 'Yes. I've listened to them and they're pretty sloppy. What's interesting about his performances is not so much the details as the line.' Zinman says he took Strauss's *Ten Golden Rules for the Album of the Young Conductor* far more seriously. 'Strauss writes that "*Salome* and *Elektra* should sound like Mendelssohn – fairy music". And I think that what you'll hear in our recordings is lightness, transparency and detail, it's not just a wash of sound. And hopefully you'll hear things you never heard before.'

Zinman's Zurich discography also includes an elegant traversal of Mozart's violin concertos with Pamela Frank, and a thrillingly propulsive account of Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*. There's more Beethoven to come, too – all the overtures, the piano concertos with Yefim Bronfman, the Violin Concerto with Christian Tetzlaff, and perhaps even *Fidelio*. What's missing in this line-up is any inkling of Zinman's fervent commitment to new music and living composers. These days, Michael Tilson Thomas and Esa-Pekka Salonen are being heaped with praise for the freshness of their programming, but the fact is that Zinman had been doing much the same thing in Baltimore a decade earlier. I heard a lot of new music in Baltimore – Adams, Daugherty, Harbison, Kernis, Rouse, Torke and other young Americans were regular fixtures there. Now that he's in Zurich, however, he's turned his attention to Swiss composers. 'If I were to proselytise for American music, Swiss composers would say, "He's the conductor of our most famous orchestra and he's

'It's important to bring out the music's obsessive, qualities. Schumann is all obsession and longing'

conducting American music!" They would feel put down. It would be the same as if the music director in Baltimore only conducted European composers. So, I'm trying to get to know the younger generation of Swiss composers, though it's hard because a lot of them are still in the 1960s in their musical language. And then there are only so many pieces you can do in that style before the orchestra rebels.' Zurich audiences tend to be conservative, too, he says. 'I remember once doing Boulez's *Eclat* (which I think is a very good piece), and a woman came up to me afterwards and said: "Why did you play that? That music has no meaning whatsoever!" And I replied: "Well, what meaning do goldfish have? You put them in a bowl and watch them swim around. Does everything have to have a meaning?" And this was when I first went to Zurich, and there were letters written; they were very frightened. Now I give them that music in homeopathic doses.'

The seriousness of the conductor's commitment to new music should not be underestimated, however. In 2001, Zinman resigned from his position as conductor emeritus of the Baltimore Symphony because the orchestra was no longer programming contemporary American fare. 'I felt that everything I had done in Baltimore was just thrown out as far as new music was concerned. I tried to make the place a haven for composers because I think that the future of music is our composers. So, to have four seasons in a row when they only play one American piece and it's Barber's *Adagio* – well, I can't come and smile and guest conduct because that would have been an endorsement. And I don't want to be one of these guys who doesn't take a stand.'

David Zinman's recording of the Schumann symphonies with the Tonhalle orchestra is reviewed on page 51

IF THE ROLE FITS, SING IT

Deborah Voigt is one of today's great Wagnerian sopranos and she's got a new EMI disc to prove it. Vivien Schweitzer sat in on Voigt's first encounter with the edited recording

Nervous?' asks Deborah Voigt of the jittery student preparing to sing at the Horne Foundation masterclass she gave at New York's Zankel Hall in January. 'Don't worry, so am I!' Such modesty might seem strange from an internationally acclaimed dramatic soprano who has just released her first solo album on EMI, but Voigt's self-deprecating humour is part of her charm. After a glowing introduction from a sprightly, just-turned-70 Marilyn Horne, Voigt's jovial manner quickly put the visibly nervous young singers at ease – and she is equally gracious with me, the staff at EMI and everyone else she interacts with.

Perhaps this lack of diva airs and graces can be attributed to her genuine surprise at her escalating success. 'Sometimes I still pinch myself,' she laughs. 'I didn't grow up anticipating being an opera singer and because I didn't expect it, it's all been a very nice surprise. I have colleagues who grew up worshipping at the altar of Maria Callas, but to achieve that is very rare. If you have that kind of career as your goal everything would seem quite disappointing. You have to be talented and you have to work hard, but there's an awful lot of luck – being in the right place at the right time – involved.'

The time certainly seems right for Voigt. Last May, she was the

first American to sing Isolde in the premiere of a new production of *Tristan* at the Vienna State Opera, her performance attracting rave reviews. She returns this May to sing Isolde again and gives her Carnegie Hall debut in April. Significantly, April also sees the release of her first recording as an exclusive artist with EMI.

Recorded with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Sir Richard Armstrong, the disc is of arias and scenes from Wagner and Strauss operas, repertoire that is, Voigt admits, harder to push than favourites from *La bohème* or *Traviata*. Even so, both she and

result. And it's not hard to hear why. Voigt is distinguished by her ability to cut through the dense orchestrations of Strauss and Wagner without what one *New York Times* critic called the 'stand and shout approach of many Wagner singers' today. The arias highlight Voigt's extraordinary ability to soar effortlessly and luminously above the orchestra with her trademark rich, lustrous, never hard or brittle voice.

'That was a bit wild', she chuckles, after listening to the high notes in Act 1 of *Tristan*. On the whole though, she is content. 'I was thrilled with the orchestra and

Even so, she couldn't pass up the opportunity to participate in a new production in Vienna with a conductor she liked (Christian Thielemann) and a tenor (Thomas Moser) she enjoyed working with.

Her immediate plans include concerts and recitals and more Italian repertoire to keep her voice lyric and lighter and retain what she calls the 'feminine quality' longer. Recitals also allow the public to see her in a different light. 'It's nice to have a chance to show them my personality in a much more intimate environment. Which is not to say that they don't terrify me, because they do.'

'I am somewhat of a rare bread – Wagnerians don't just fall off the trees'

EMI are optimistic. 'I'm a Wagnerian/Straussian soprano, and that's not as palatable to the general public as some of my more lyric colleagues, so it's a tougher sell. But EMI was looking for an American with a European presence, who could sing other genres of music as well, because that's important for the American public. So the timing was right and it all came together.'

Voigt's easy-going charm melts into a fierce concentration as we listen to her new recording at EMI in Manhattan a few days after the masterclass. Musicians are perhaps harder to please than music critics when listening to their own recordings, but Voigt seems satisfied with the overall

Armstrong. I would have changed just a couple of tempi, and one high note in [Chrysothemis's scene in] *Elektra*. But I'm happy with a lot of other elements, which sound very much like a performance.'

The tiny dog Voigt affectionately calls Steinway (who travels everywhere with her – in this case in what appears to be a large duffle bag) seems to be trying to sing along with Isolde. After quietening him down, Voigt says 'I'm fortunate in that I am somewhat of a rare breed – Wagnerians just don't fall off the trees. No operatic voice type does, but we're even rarer.' However, having taken on *Tristan* earlier than she had anticipated, she wants to avoid being pigeonholed as a Wagnerian.

Voigt grew up outside Chicago, then in California, in a conservative Baptist household. She sang in school musicals and choirs and didn't see an opera until college. She hasn't abandoned her early roots in musical theatre and still has fun treating her audiences to Broadway numbers, as she did last November with 'Deborah Voigt on Broadway'. After attending California State University at Fullerton and taking part in San Francisco Opera's Merola Program for young artists, Voigt won first prize in the 1988 Luciano Pavarotti Voice Competition and the gold medal at the 1990 Tchaikovsky International Competition. The operatic world took note after her resounding success

1: WIENER STAATSOOPER GMBH / AXEL ZEININGER; 2: DEVON CASS



Deborah Voigt's triumphant Isolde in Vienna also marked the first time an American soprano had been invited to sing in a premiere of *Tristan* at the State Opera

in 1991 as Ariadne with the Boston Lyric Opera, which was followed by a well-reviewed Chrysothemis in the Met's 1992 *Elektra*. Since then, she has sung at many of the world's most prestigious theatres and enjoyed numerous successes at the Met, most notably with Ariadne, the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and Sieglinde in *Walküre*.

Voigt claims various vocal influences, but stresses the importance of finding your own voice. 'You glean different things from different people,' she explains. 'I listen to Kirsten Flagstad quite a bit when preparing for a German role. Maria Callas is influential for pretty obvious reasons. Margaret Price has a very smooth, silky voice yet she recorded *Tristan*, so I listen to that a lot because I can

identify with her more than I can Birgit Nilsson, for example, in terms of vocal approach.'

Voigt acknowledges her large stature will be a barrier to some roles, adding that she would like to sing Salome onstage, but it couldn't happen without a clever director. She has had run-ins with directors who take issue with her size. 'Some theatres want the legitimate sound and more traditional kind of voice type and others are more concerned with your waist size. Sometimes the theatre assumes that the public won't be happy with a leading lady who is not the normal standard size, which bothers me because most of the world is not thin and beautiful. It also bothers me that people would assume the tenor couldn't

be in love with the soprano because her hips are too big.'

In an ideal world a wonderful voice would suffice, but Voigt is resigned to the reality of working in a business that seems to be veering more and more toward superficiality. 'People have more places to put their money than they did 50 years ago. That's the world I am living in – so it doesn't do me any good to walk around with a chip on my shoulder.'

Winning approval for her own interpretations of the Wagner or Strauss roles immortalised by the likes of Leonie Rysanek is another challenge. 'Sometimes you read something to the effect of "Wow she's good but she's no Rysanek". Which is true, because I'm not. But I sometimes I get frustrated

because you can't compete with someone's first experience. And if the first time they saw *Frau ohne Schatten* it was with Rysanek then they will carry that to the grave and they should, because she was a wonderful performer.

'However,' she earnestly adds, 'I don't think you can compare people that way. Rysanek brought things to the stage that I never would be able to and I bring things that she herself told me that she couldn't have done. So it's just an apples and oranges kind of thing. But,' she laughs, 'I look forward to the day when someone says "So and so was not as good as Deborah Voigt!"'

Voigt's debut recital disc is reviewed on page 91

Detour...

Bernard Herrmann

Despite his struggle for acceptance in the concert-hall, Herrmann's triumphs on the cinema screen secure him a place in the composer's pantheon, argues Nick Shave

Film music is significant in many ways, of course, but not as music, which is why the proposition that better composers could produce better film music is not necessarily true: the standards of the category defeat high standards.' With these words, Igor Stravinsky not only justified his own unsuccessful attempts to marry music with image, but also articulated the commonly held view that such marital affairs produce music's feeblest offspring. In nearly a century of alliances between high art and Tinseltown commerce, only a handful of film composers have been deemed worthy of serious consideration by film and music critics. Bernard Herrmann (1911-75) has earned the respect of both. Few deny Herrmann's contribution, both as a film composer and outspoken advocate of his craft. Fewer still are capable of fusing image and sound with the same degree of craftsmanship.

If he were alive today, Herrmann might well frown upon the sound-drenched blockbusters; the artless noise of horror; the pop songs that jar on screen (but sell by the bucket-load) and his own recent contributions to Hollywood's new releases. Since his death, his themes have played out on more than 15 new releases, more than two-thirds of which draw upon his scores for Alfred Hitchcock. His screeching strings for *Psycho*'s shower scene are dredged up more regularly than the guests of the Bates Motel, embedded in the popular psyche as the archetypal sound of horror. Whether referenced to raise a laugh, as in Pixar's animation *Finding Nemo*, or repeated in earnest,

as in Gus Van Sant's colour *Psycho* remake (1988), it all bodes badly for Herrmann, whose lifelong aspiration to establish his reputation as a composer who wrote for film – not Hitchcock's film composer – seems more pedantic and wrong-headed by the day.

Cast your ears back to New York's jazz age, however, and you begin to hear how Herrmann's reputation has swung out of line. He made his earliest attempts at writing opera at the age of 12, before studying composition and conducting at New York University and then at Juilliard. As a conductor, he championed new music, in particular Charles Ives, in whom he discovered 'the fundamental expression of America... a brooding introspective and profoundly philosophic temperament'. Forward thinking, Herrmann was drawn to the mavericks of his time, as well as to the jazz that inspired his friends Aaron Copland and George Gershwin and would later play out in his urban themes for Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*.

At the same time as joining CBS as head of educational programmes in 1934, Herrmann had high hopes of becoming a world-class conductor. It wasn't to be. After cultivating the opportunity to conduct the New York Philharmonic in 1947, his two concerts at New York's Lewisohn Stadium were critically slammed. His large-scale concert-hall works – the foundations of his repertoire – were too savagely deconstructed: despite advocacy from John Barbirolli, *The New York Times* declared his cantata *Moby Dick* to be 'pretentious and ineffectually noisy'; his Symphony fell short of Philadelphia Orchestra conductor Eugene Ormandy's requirements



1, 2, 3 KOBAL COLLECTION

by being, in the conductor's view, 'about 15 minutes too long'. Despite repeated attempts to stage his opera *Wuthering Heights*, it was only after his death the Portland Opera Company would give its world premiere. Forty-five minutes of the opera were axed for its performance.

So was Stravinsky correct after all? Was Herrmann's struggle for acceptance in the concert hall a sign that he actually belonged to the cinema, where music goes unnoticed? Several of the world's conductors – such as Esa-Pekka Salonen – and performers – Dame

Kiri Te Kanawa – who have placed his film themes at the foreground in their recordings, clearly think not. True, the longevity of Herrmann's scores has pivoted upon the quality of the films he wrote for, yet even when placed out of context, the affective qualities of his themes show few signs of diminishing. When blonde assassin, Daryl Hannah, whistles Herrmann's theme-tune from *Twisted Nerve*, in Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill, Part 1*, we needn't have seen the bloodshed of Roy Boulting's late-sixties horror to smell a whiff of sadism in the air.

THE ESSENTIAL BERNARD HERRMANN

The Ghost and Mrs Muir
Varèse Sarabande VSD5850 (1/98)
Poetic and personal, Herrmann's favourite score carries with it the sentimental charm of Mankiewicz's Hollywood classic. Its extensive use of leitmotif led Herrmann to half-jokingly call it his 'Max Steiner' score.

Citizen Kane – The Classic Film Scores of Bernard Herrmann RCA 7072 (11/91 – US only) Though failing to live up to its title, Charles Gerhardt's recording offers the opportunity to hear Kiri Te Kanawa breathe new life into

Herrmann's pastiche of late 19th-century Franco-Oriental opera, *Salammbô*. His *Concerto Macabre* from *Hangover Square* features alongside cues from *White Witch Doctor*, *On Dangerous Ground* and *Beneath the 12-Mile Reef*. Kane punts might prefer the Australian Philharmonic's full score on Preamble (PRCD1788)

Vertigo Varèse Sarabande VSD5759 (3/97) Muir Mathieson infuses the Wagnerian sweep of Herrmann's love theme with appropriate passion, and

the Sinfonia of London deliver his dream-like themes with apt delicacy.

Psycho Varèse Sarabande VSD5765 (A/97) Not the kind of sound you'll want to return to time and again, but Herrmann's own recording of his infamously brutal string themes is a firm reminder of how inventive this monochromatic strings-only score was for its time. 'The strange thing was the number of colleagues and informed members of the public who have asked what instruments I used,' he later said of its infamous Shower Scene. 'They

couldn't recognise the sound of a string orchestra – the same kind that plays the music of Mozart and Haydn.'

Taxi Driver
Varèse Sarabande VSD5279
Recorded the night before Herrmann died, his music chillingly conjures up the violent undercurrents and sleaze of 1970s Manhattan with brooding themes for low brass and menacing percussion and blusey saxophone underscoring director Martin Scorsese's vision of urban hell.

The heroes and anti-heroes of *Taxi Driver*, *Citizen Kane* and *North by Northwest* offered strong and strongly contrasted backdrops for Bernard Herrmann to paint on a sonic canvas with stark memorability



Similarly, his shower-scene screeches in *Finding Nemo* are enough to express a melodramatic moment of anxiety without the aid of Norman Bates. In short, Herrmann's music speaks for itself.

Or rather, his 60-odd film scores rely as much for their affective qualities upon their visual associations as they do upon his supreme command of tone colour. Beginning with his first film score, *Citizen Kane* (1941), he eschewed Hollywood's practise of painting in broad orchestral brush strokes and applied instrumental colours only where they were needed – and by whatever means. Electronic violins and the recorded sound of singing telephone wires were drawn into his soundtrack for *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (1941); the weird whine of the theremin ushered in the future sound of sci-fi in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) and the orchestra was stripped down to monochrome strings in *Psycho* (1960). Herrmann's music presents a logical extension to French Impressionism in which sonorities find their visual analogies on screen. 'Debussy said that cinema would allow the perfect creation of poetry, vision and dreams,' he

once pondered. 'If Debussy had lived long enough into the era of the sound film, who knows what he would have created.'

In his Hitchcock collaborations, in particular *Vertigo* (1958) and *North by Northwest* (1959), Herrmann hit the apex of his dramatic style, with large-scale tonal processes playing a key role in bridging the emotional gap between audience and on-screen psychology. In his study of Herrmann, *Hitchcock and the Music of the Irrational* (Cinema Journal 21: 1982) Royal S Brown finds that 'the essence of Herrmann's Hitchcock scoring lies in a harmonic ambiguity whereby the musical language familiar to Western listeners serves as a point of departure, only to be modified in such a way that expectations are held in suspense for much longer periods of time than [we] are accustomed to'. With film providing the foundations on which Herrmann could arrange his ideas, the composer was free to stretch the tonal ambiguities of post-Wagnerian harmony to their most dramatic conclusions. Should we not, then, regard his unresolving dissonances – the diminished sevenths and

augmented triads of *Vertigo*, or the unsettling tritone of *Psycho*'s finale – as tonality in its most manipulative guise?

While embracing the French school and exhibiting a mastery of pastiche, Herrmann's feet were firmly planted in the German Romantic tradition. Highly strung, paranoiac, and suffering recurring anxieties about death, he found in film 'a great opportunity to express myself'. His sense of nostalgia, too, pervades the sighing motifs of his scores. Ironically, it was the same personal traits that hampered his prospects


understand the art. It's just as well he didn't live to see what's going on today'.

Truth is, Herrmann's outlook on the future of film music was as bleak as Stravinsky's view of his time. In his last interview with *Sight and Sound* magazine he bemoaned the demise of his art. 'The art of writing music for films is close enough to extinction... because the new people coming into it simply haven't got the technical know-how,' he claimed. True, he had suffered the painful consequences of a break with Hitchcock (who had axed his

'In *Vertigo* and *North by Northwest*,

Herrmann hit the apex of his dramatic style'

in the concert hall that were also at the root of his achievements on screen. While his taciturn manner on the concert podium could bring out the worst in his players, it was also indicative of his capacity for pain, rejection and his obsessive quest for perfection. As friend and film composer, Elmer Bernstein recalls: 'He was a loving person and an angry person too, angry about incompetence and angry with people who didn't

score for *Torn Curtain*) and no doubt felt the need to assert his authority following a lull in his career. But what Herrmann called for was, at the very least, a distinction between the business of penning muzak for celluloid and the craft of marrying sound with image. In putting his beliefs into practice, he created dramatic music that's not only worth hearing, but also worth a closer listen. 

WILHELM KEMPF (1895-1991)

HEAVEN IN A WILDFLOWER

Stephen Plaistow recalls a keen gardener, man of letters – and pianist of poetry

Wilhelm Kempff had a long career which blossomed through two decades after the deaths of Artur Schnabel and Edwin Fischer in the 1950s. Yet he never carried the flame for the Austro-German repertory quite as they did, or as Alfred Brendel has done in our own time. Earlier he had worked with such conductors as Nikisch and Furtwängler, but among celebrated German players who were reestablishing themselves after World War II the brilliant and mercurial Gieseking and the ever reliable Backhaus were often preferred to him. Kempff was not renowned for reliability. As he admitted, there were times in his life when he was a casual worker and should have practised more.

In fact, he was very much his own man, enriching the tradition which had nurtured and nourished him in often surprising ways. You could never mistake him – his luminous sound was instantly recognisable – but he was variable and unpredictable. Above all he was spontaneous. He played a great deal and liked recording, but in an age which came to put such value on high polish he was sometimes undervalued. In his youth he had been quite dashing, but there is agreement that the full distinction of his musical personality emerged only in the 1950s, in his middle age. In Germany it was really only in his later years that he was venerated. Alfred Brendel told me that the critics had sometimes given him quite a hard time – that was the case in this country too. It was as though his face didn't quite fit. As Yehudi Menuhin, one of his partners in chamber music, put it: 'a pianist who remained true to the age when clock and metronome had not yet taken over the organic rhythm of the music and who was truer to our age in his self-discipline'. Through periods of changing ideologies, Kempff continued the lifetime's work of being an artist, as he saw it. Menuhin thought him the noblest exponent of the German tradition.

Early days and Joachim

Brahms and Clara Schumann were alive when Kempff was born, and it was Joseph Joachim who advised on the young man's



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musical education. He played to Busoni, heard Eugen d'Albert, one of Liszt's greatest pupils, and his own teacher, Heinrich Barth (also Artur Rubinstein's), had been a prize pupil of Hans von Bülow, Liszt's son-in-law. More pertinent than all that name-dropping is the fact that on his entry to the Berlin Conservatory (at the age of nine) it was into a musical world in which the great German 19th-century traditions of piano playing and composition were still vital.

His recording career spanned 60 years, all of it for DG save for an important period in the 1950s, in the early years of the LP, when he made records for Decca at its West Hampstead studios in London. My information is that his first 78 was of Beethoven's *Ecosaises* and one of the Op 33 Bagatelles. I've heard another from the 1920s of the Schumann Toccata, slightly cut and driven flat out in order to fit a four-minute side. Schumann as well as Beethoven had been close to Kempff since his boyhood, but performing bravura pieces didn't really interest him and they eventually fell from his repertoire.

Acclaim for his Beethoven playing came early: his début with the Berlin Philharmonic and

Nikisch was in the Fourth Concerto, in 1918, and he had included the *Hammerklavier* Sonata in his first Berlin recital. A date of 1926 is given for the beginning of his first sonata cycle for DG, which if true would put it several years ahead of Schnabel's enterprise for HMV. But Schnabel completed his cycle and Kempff didn't, not quite. Two complete ones were to follow, however, the second a stereo remake in the mid-1960s. Unlike Schnabel and Fischer, Kempff was quite at ease in the studio, unperturbed by the technical processes. There, as on the platform, the inspiration of the moment was all-important and his performances sought to communicate new discoveries. Not that there was anything frivolous in his pursuit of spontaneity; what he did, if impulsive, was driven always by artistic will.

Beethoven, a passion for life

His Beethoven was magisterial but human – not god-like. He saw himself as the medium of the music's transmission, and when on song it was the music itself which seemed to be playing. Favouring neither very slow nor very quick tempos, he could grade line and

sound over wondrously long spans, as if bar-lines didn't exist, and lay out a slow movement as if painting a canvas, inviting us into a space and making us aware of the highs and lows, the movement, the shadows and the quality of the light. He played like a composer, and indeed he was one. His colouring went always with the movement of the harmony and he kept larger shapes as sharply in focus as the detail. It is, I think, essentially an intimate, lyrical scale of performance, though far from a circumscribed one; his sonority had easy access to strong statements. He was a master at making his tone and *cantabile* carry even at the softest dynamic. Perhaps that is something his pupil Mitsuko Uchida got from him.

His exceptionally successful career as a concerto player reveals another side to him. Brendel remembers visits to Munich in the 1950s to hear him in the Beethoven concertos, which were 'full of wonderful things'. His two Beethoven cycles with the Berlin Philharmonic from the 1950s and '60s, respectively, have achieved near-classic status and rarely been absent from the catalogue. The stereo version with Ferdinand Leitner is the better

known, but I've recently enjoyed renewing acquaintance with the earlier, conducted by Paul van Kempen. Kempff's playing has a fine range of sound and does not lack power, but it is a complete rhetoric of persuasion and authority, vivid even when speaking quietly, and one senses the orchestra being led and inspired to make a discourse with him. It was in the 1950s that he produced some of his best work, and the concerto recordings from this decade also include a Schumann Concerto with the LSO and Josef Krips, treated as a delectable narrative from start to finish, two Mozart concertos, an impressive Brahms No 1 with Konwitschny and the Staatskapelle Dresden, and the two Liszt concertos. The Liszt were with the LSO again, on an occasion when his relaxed pianism and distinction in this composer did not find receptive partners, alas, and the performances come into focus only when Anatole Fistoulari isn't trying to sex them up. Bad old days and an opportunity missed.

But they were good days for a player at the height of his powers who had a large repertoire, a phenomenal musical memory and a well-stocked mind. The long-playing record was a recent invention and new catalogues needed to be assembled, and later, of course, new stereo recordings as well. Kempff was just the kind of artist companies were keen to work with. The Liszt solo pieces he set down on LP for Decca

in the '50s, along with much Brahms, some Schumann and some Schubert, have found their way, many of them, into the three representations of Kempff in the Great Pianists of the 20th Century series. Brendel recalls that Kempff's concerts and recordings of the '50s 'disclosed to me what Liszt's music was about: no-one played the *Legends* or the *Gondoliera* like him. And no-one else at that time presented a Schubert sonata as a work that orchestrally filled large halls.' In Liszt, as in Schumann, it was Kempff's perception that their inspirations nearly always derived from a poetic or literary idea which it is the function of the pianist's virtuosity to serve, not to exploit. Their compositions are hard for every pianist, but he did not regard the difficult numbers as virtuoso challenges to be confronted and despatched. Always the music had to be paramount, and beautiful sound, and a control of singing voices under the fingers that should follow Liszt, Schumann – anyone – instinctively in the exploration of the piano's potential.

Indian summers

No doubt the pieces in Liszt's Italian books of *Années de pèlerinage* – recollections of that country's visual arts and poetry – particularly appealed to him, the cultivated German who felt the *Drang nach Süden*, the pull of the South, and spent a lot of his later life in Italy, at Positano, playing and teaching. Every summer he

Wilhelm Kempff in his garden at Positano, where he made his home for his last 40 years and where he passed on his lyrical approach to Beethoven in summer courses



DG / IRENE BAUER-KEMPF

held courses on Beethoven there, quite privately, to young players of special ability he wanted to encourage. Definitely not the kind of public master classes with people paying for admission and TV cameras everywhere. I'm told he had a garden of exquisite beauty and knew every flower, every stone, every bird-call and all the formations he observed in the night sky.

The three CDs in the BBC Legends series are documents of what he sounded like towards the end of his Indian summer and have many treasurable things. They derive from recitals in London at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, recorded for broadcast, some of which I produced. My head of department, who did not like his playing, used to question why I was always so keen to record 'Hitler's

favourite pianist', but I'm glad I got my way. Not much time to talk but on the last occasion I remember his inquiry about the best way to get to Kew Gardens, a visit planned for the following morning. I remember too my surprise, and I probably gave over-detailed instructions about the North London line, but now it all seems to fit.

It is a large discography, and uneven, but when the right wind blew Kempff could produce playing in which energy and grace were held in ideal balance – in which indeed he appeared to do little but to miss nothing, free as a bird. It is playing which tends to stay with you, if you respond to it at all, like Schnabel's and Edwin Fischer's and Cortot's, and in the years since his death his stock, like theirs, has continued to rise. ●

DATES FROM A CAREER & KEY RECORDINGS

1895 Born November 25 in Jüterbö, Prussia, son of an organist and cantor
1899 Family moves to Potsdam
1904 Enters Berlin Hochschule für Musik
1916 First concert tour of Germany as pianist and organist of the Court and Cathedral Choir of Berlin
1917 First solo recital in Berlin at the Singakademie. Awarded Mendelssohn prize for piano and composition
1918 Début with the BPO
1919-20 First acoustic recordings
1924-9 Director of the Stuttgart Hochschule für Musik
1926 Début in London; he does not reappear there until 1951

1929 Première of his Symphony No 2 conducted by Furtwängler
1931-41 Teaches at summer courses at Potsdam with Edwin Fischer and Walter Gieseking
1934 First concerts in South America
1950 First recordings for Decca
1951 Publishes his memoirs, *Unter dem Zimbelstein*
1954 Plays organ works by Bach at a memorial concert in Hiroshima
1957-82 Gives annual Beethoven master classes at Positano in Italy
1959 Début in North America
1964 Début in New York
1991 Dies May 23 at Positano

Recordings

Beethoven Piano Concertos *Leitner* DG 419 856-2GGA (1 & 2, 9/88), 419 467-2GGA (3 & 4, 9/87), 419 468-2GGA (No 5, 12/87)
Beethoven Piano Sonatas (1950s) DG mono 447 966-2GDO8 (4/96)
Beethoven Piano Sonatas (1960s) DG 453 724-2GCB8 (A/97)
Beethoven Violin Sonatas *Menuhin* DG 415 874-2GCM4 (6/87)
Beethoven Cello Sonatas *Fournier* DG 453 013-2GTA2 (11/96)
Schumann Piano works DG 471 312-2GB4
London recital 1974 Beethoven, Bach, Schubert BBC Legends BBCL4045-2 (2/01)
Original Masters Complete 1950s Concerto recordings (Beethoven, Brahms, Liszt, Mozart, Schumann) DG mono 474 024-2GOM5
Original Masters Complete 1950s solo recordings DG mono 474 393-2GOM5
Great Pianists of the Century 55 Brahms, Schumann Philips 456 862-2PM2 (10/98)
Great Pianists of the Century 56 Beethoven, Mozart, Liszt Philips 456 865-2PM2 (7/99)
Great Pianists of the Century 57 Beethoven, Brahms, Fauré, Mozart, Schubert Philips 456 868-2PM2 (7/99)
Kempff on video Beethoven, Schubert EMI Classic Archive 490447-9 (1/04)



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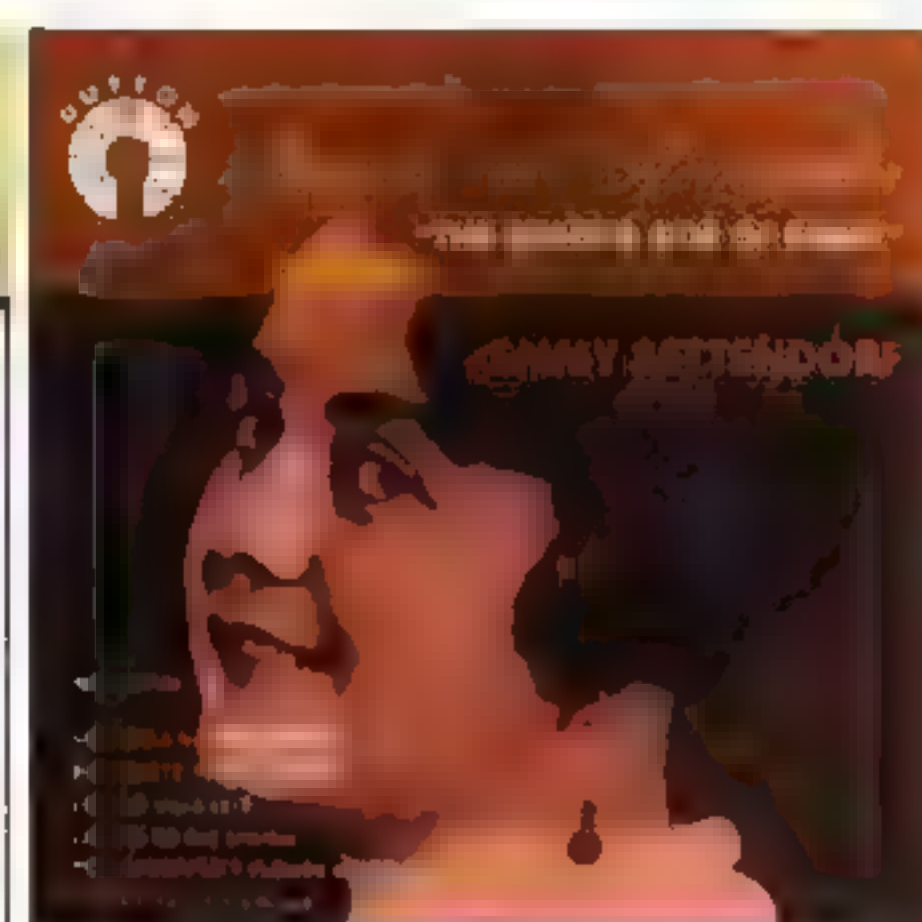
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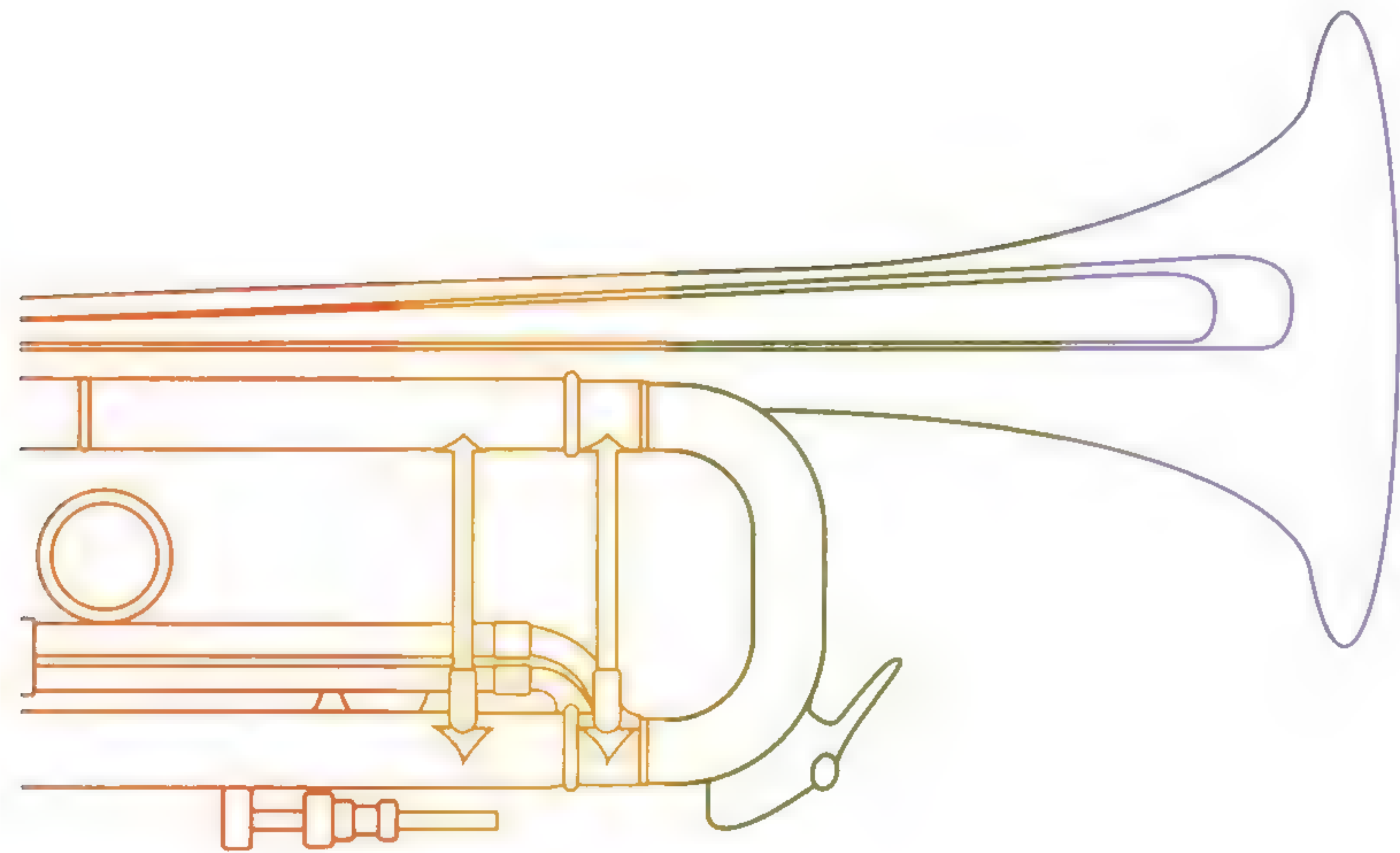
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Summer is a time to enjoy music in different settings – outdoors, in glorious buildings or simply in the company of a wealth of great music-making by great artists. We reveal what's on this summer at festivals throughout Europe. The list is not exhaustive, but here are what we consider to be the season's highlights. We've also marked a few events that have caught our eye and, we hope, will appeal to you too: they're marked, simply, by a heart! ♥



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Nadezhda Serdiuk Princess Clarissa

EuropaChorAkademie;

Mahler CO / Tugan Sokhiev

July 6, 8, 9, 13, 15, 17, 20, 21 (all at 9.30pm)

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Handel Hercules

William Shimell Hercules Joyce

DiDonato Dejanira Toby Spence

Hyllus Christine Schäfer Iole

Malena Ernman Lichas;

Les Arts Florissants / William Christie

July 7, 10, 11, 14, 16, 18, 23, 25, 30 (all at 9.30pm)

Théâtre de l'Archevêché

Verdi La traviata

Mireille Delunsch, Anna Samuil

Violetta Andrew Richards, Valery

Serkin Alfredo Zeligko Lucie Germont

Mahler CO / Tugan Sokhiev

July 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23 25 (5pm)

Théâtre du Jeu de Paume

Hosokawa Hanjo

Ingela Bohlin Hanako Fredrika

Brillembourg, Lilli Paasikivi Jitsuko

Honda William Dazeley Yoshio

Monnaie CO / Kazushi Ono

July 22, 24, 26, 28, 29, 31 (all 9.30pm)

Le Grand Saint-Jean

Mozart Die Entführung aus dem Serail

Madeline Bender Konstanze Magali

Léger Blonde Matthias Klink

Belmonte Loïc Felix Pedrillo

EuropaChorAkademie; Les Musiciens

du Louvre / Marc Minkowski

July 27 (at 9.30pm) ♥

Théâtre de l'Archevêché

Mahler (arr Schoenberg)

Das Lied von der Erde

Anna Larsson contr Jorma Silvasti

ten **Mahler** CO / Daniel Harding

ALDEBURGH FESTIVAL

June 11-27

+44 (0)1728 687110

www.aldeburgh.co.uk

June 11, 18

The Martingale, Snape

Birtwistle The Io Passion

(world première)

Quatuor Diotima / Alan Hacker cl

June 12

The Martingale, Snape

Tippett Corelli Fantasia **Holst** Lovely

Venus. David's Lament for Jonathan.

The Fields of Sorrow **Birtwistle** The

Fields of Sorrow **Britten** A time there

was... **Vaughan Williams** Flos Campi

Isabelle van Keulen tr

Britten-Pears Chamber Choir,

Britten Sinfonia / Thomas Adès

June 14 ♥

The Martingale, Snape

Adès Traced Overhead

Beethoven Piano Sonata No 18

Ives Sonata No 2, Concord, Mass

Pierre-Laurent Aimard pf

June 17 (11am)

The Martingale, Snape

Bartók String Quartet No 3

Haydn String Quartet, Op 20 No 3

Schoenberg Verklärte Nacht

Belcea Quartet, Vertavo Quartet

June 19

The Martingale, Snape

Vaughan Williams Tallis Fantasia

Woolrich Oboe Concerto

Birtwistle Ritual Fragments

Janáček Taras Bulba

Nicholas Daniel ob

Birmingham Contemporary Music

Group; CBSO / Sakari Oramo

June 20

The Martingale, Snape

Kurtág Hölderlin: An...

Britten Sechs Hölderlin-Fragmente

Schumann Dichterliebe

Ian Bostridge tr

Thomas Adès pf

June 21 (11am)

The Martingale, Snape

Bartók String Quartet No 5

Haydn String Quartet, Op 20 No 5

June 22

The Martingale, Snape

Bartók String Quartet No 6

Haydn String Quartet, Op 20 No 1

Enescu Octet

Belcea Quartet, Vertavo Quartet

June 23

The Martingale, Snape

Haydn Piano Trio, Hob XV/29

Schumann Piano Trio, Op 80

Dvořák Piano Trio, Op 65

Florestan Trio

June 25

The Martingale, Snape

Mozart Sonatas for Piano and Violin -

K337, K303, K304, K302 and K526

Mitsuko Uchida pf

Mark Steinberg vn

June 26

The Martingale, Snape

Mozart Zaide (text by Italo Calvino)

Soloists from **Britten-Pears** Young

Artist Programme; **Britten-Pears**

Orchestra / Paul McCreech

June 27 (4pm)

The Martingale, Snape

Holst Egdon Heath **Birtwistle** The Cry

of Anubis **Janáček** From the House of

the Dead - Prelude **Vaughan Williams**

In the Fen Country

Ligeti Concert Romances

Britten Four Sea Interludes

CBSO / Sakari Oramo

BATH

Bath International Music Festival

May 21-June 6

+44 (0)1225 463362

www.bathmusicfest.org.uk

May 22

Bath Abbey

Bach Orchestral Suites Nos 2 and 3

Albinoni Oboe Concerto.

Works by **Boyce, Handel** and **Purcell**

The King's Consort / Robert King

May 23

Downside Abbey

The Play of Daniel

The Clerks' Group / Edward Wickham

May 24

Bath Abbey

Biber A rare performance of the Missa

Christi Resurgens, a festive choral

work with fanfares and processions

English Concert / Andrew Manze vn

MARILYN MEETS VERDI

Peter Mussbach's production of *La traviata* gets a second outing at Aix after its single appearance last year, when the festival was aborted due to strike action. Mireille Delunsch's doomed courtesan is on stage throughout, Elektra-like, while projections flash behind her underlining her celluloid distance and detachment.



ELIZABETH CARECCHIO

June 15 (11am)

The Martingale, Snape

Bartók String Quartet No 2

Haydn String Quartet, Op 20 No 2

Belcea Quartet

June 16

The Martingale, Snape

Britten Les Illuminations

Bartók Bluebeard's Castle

Rita Cullis sop John Tomlinson bass

Britten-Pears Orch / Graeme Jenkins

Janáček String Quartet No 1, 'The

Kreutzer Sonata'

Belcea Quartet, Vertavo Quartet

June 21

The Martingale, Snape

Dallapiccola Piccola Musica Notturna

Birtwistle Silbury Air

Works by **Woolrich, Tansy Davies,**

Donatoni, Bryn Harrison and **Hayes**

John Harle sax **Birmingham**

Contemporary Music Group /

Diego Masson



HARRISON BIRTWISTLE is featured composer at both the Aldeburgh and Lucerne festivals this year - a fitting tribute to his pre-eminent status and a chance to reassess his protean output



THE VERTAVO QUARTET take Bartók to Suffolk after their acclaimed Simax discs. They also team up with the Belcea Quartet for three concerts of sextets and octets



PIERRE-LAURENT AIMARD promises to dazzle Salzburg and Aldeburgh audiences with characteristically jaw-dropping recitals of 20th-century music: prepare to be astonished

May 25

Assembly Rooms

Mozart Serenade No 10, 'Gran Partita', interspersed with readings from the composer's letters to his father
Netherlands Wind Ensemble / Bart Schneeman

May 28

Assembly Rooms

Haydn String Quartet, Op 71 No 3
Brahms String Quartet, Op 51 No 1
Bartók String Quartet No 2
Belcea Quartet

May 29

Assembly Rooms

Friends of Susan Chilcott in a tribute concert to the acclaimed soprano who died last year. The programme will include songs by **Vaughan Williams**, **Verdi**, **Britten**, **Bridge**, **Tchaikovsky**. Singers include **Dame Josephine Barstow**, **Dame Anne Evans**, **Susan Bickley**, **Neal Davies** and **Catrin Wyn-Davies**, with **Iain Burnside pf**

June 3

Assembly Rooms

Lute songs, including works by **John Dowland** and **Thomas Campion**
Andreas Scholl *countertenor*
tbc lte

June 4

Assembly Rooms

Debussy Préludes, Book 2
Liszt Jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este. Ballade No 2. Transcriptions and paraphrases on 'Rigoletto', 'Tannhäuser' and 'Tristan und Isolde'
Jean-Yves Thibaudet pf

June 6

Assembly Rooms

Haydn Piano Trio No 18
Shostakovich Piano Trio No 2
Schubert Piano Trio No 1
Beaux Arts Trio

BEVERLEY

Beverley and East Riding Early Music Festival

June 1-6

+44 (0)1904 658338
 www.ncem.co.uk

June 4

Beverley Minster

Bach Suite No 2. Harpsichord Concertos in D and G minor. Brandenburg Concerto No 5
Rachel Brown fl/rec **Pavlo Beznosiuk vn**
Academy of Ancient Music / Richard Egarr bpd

June 5 (12 noon)

St Andrew's Church, Bainton
 Italian music from the 17th century, including works by **Uccellini**, **Viviani**, **Lontai**, **Kapsperger** and **Corelli**
Pavlo Beznosiuk, **Pauline Nobes vns**
Alison McGillivray vc
William Carter theo

June 5

Beverley Minster

Gombert Regina caeli. Ave Maria. Lugebat David Absalom. Magnificat II
Palestrina Ascendo ad patrem. Missa Ascendo ad patrem. Tribulationes civitatem. Alma redemptoris mater
The Tallis Scholars / Peter Phillips

BORDEAUX

Orpheus & Bacchus Festival Le Faure, Gensac, nr Bordeaux

May 8-16

+31 (0) 20 5287 556
 www.orpheusandbacchus.com

May 10

Grieg Violin Sonata
Schubert Piano Trio No 1
Pierre Bensaid vn
Freddy Kempf pf
Kempf Trio

May 11

Bach Chaconne **Kodály** Duo for Violin and Cello **Beethoven** Sonata for violin and piano No 9, 'Kreutzer'
Levon Chilingirian vn
Alexander Chaushian vc
Anthony Hewitt pf

May 12

Saint-Saëns Cello Sonatas Nos 1 & 2
Steven Isserlis vc **Pascal Devoyon pf**

May 16

Haydn String Quartet, Op 20 No 1
Mozart Piano Quartet No 2
Dvořák String Quartet No 4
Belcea Quartet, **Freddy Kempf pf**

LOVE IN BATH



TOBY WALES

Andreas Scholl's plangent tones have a special affinity with the English lute-song tradition, as his affecting *Harmonia Mundi* album showed. He brings this haunting music to Bath's Assembly Rooms, an ideally intimate venue for these songs of simple pleasures and painful losses.

BREGENZ FESTIVAL

July 21-August 22

+43 5574 407-6
 www.bregenzerfestspiele.com

July 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 (all 9.15pm) August 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 (all 9pm)

Floating Stage

Bernstein West Side Story

July 21, 25 (11am), 31 (2pm), August 1, 8 (both 11am)

Festival Opera House

Weill The Protagonist / Royal Palace Lesser-known works of the German-born composer, written in the 1920s

July 28

Festival Opera House
Dvořák Symphony No 8
R Strauss Ein Heldenleben
BRSO / Mariss Jansons

August 2

Festival Opera House
Beethoven Coriolan Overture. Symphony No 5
Weill Berliner Requiem
Vienna SO / Yakov Kreizberg

August 9

Floating Stage

Bernstein Candide - Overture. West Side Story - Symphonic Dances. Wonderful Town
Kim Criswell sop Soloists from **Floating Stage**; **Moscow Chamber Choir**; **Vienna SO / Wayne Marshall**

BRIGHTON FESTIVAL

May 1-23

+44 (0)1273 709709
 www.brighton-festival.org.uk
 The 38th Brighton Festival offers more than 700 arts events, with the classical programme boasting two world premières

May 2

Brighton Dome
Morgan/Pochin Fanfare on a Theme of Corelli **Piers Hellawell** Cors de Chasse (for trumpet and trombone)
Janáček Glagolitic Mass
Mary Plazas sop **Juliette Pochin mez**
Christopher Lemmings ten **Grant Doyle bar** **Håkan Hardenberger tpt**
Jonas Bylund tbn **Brighton Festival Chorus**; **Philharmonia Orchestra / Thierry Fischer**

May 6

Music Room, Royal Pavilion
Haydn String Quartet, Op 33 No 1
Szymanowski String Quartet No 1
Dvořák String Quartet, Op 51
Szymanowski Quartet

May 9

Music Room, Royal Pavilion
Chopin Barcarolle. Ballade No 4
Busoni Elegies Nos 1 and 5 **Scriabin** Preludes, Op 74 **Beethoven** Piano Sonatas Nos 27 and 32
Paul Lewis pf

May 14

Brighton Dome
Smetana The Bartered Bride Overture
Dvořák Cello Concerto. Symphony No 7
Jiří Barta vc **Czech National SO / Libor Pešek**

May 15

Brighton Dome
Monteverdi L'Orfeo (semi-staged)
Mark Tucker **Orfeo** **Revital Raviv**
Euridice Joanne Lunn **La Musica**, **Proserpina Julia Gooding** **La Messaggiere**
Faye Newton **Ninfa** **Mark Chambers**
Speranza Andrew King **Apollo Roderick Williams** **Plutone New London Consort / Philip Pickett**

May 16

Brighton Dome
Diamond Jubilee Celebration
Tchaikovsky Romeo and Juliet
Heath African Sunrise - Manhattan
Holst The Planets
Evelyn Glennie perc **Festival Youth Choir**; **Brighton Youth Orchestra / Andrew Sherwood**

May 17

Music Room, Royal Pavilion
Martini Quartet No 7, 'Concerto di Camera' **Mozart** Piano Sonata, K331
Dvořák Piano Quintet
Skampa Quartet; **Melvyn Tan pf**

May 21

Brighton Dome
Berlioz La damnation de Faust
Bonaventura Bottone **Faust** **Matthew Best** **Mephistopheles** **Nora Gubisch**
Marguerite Donald **Maxwell Brander**
Brighton Chorus; **Lorraine National Orchestra / Jacques Mercier**
Pavilion Theatre's lunchtime concerts (1pm) feature young artists, some competition and award-winners, and this year celebrates singing

BRINKBURN MUSIC

July 2-4, 9-11

+44 (0)870 703 4555
 www.brinkburnfestival.co.uk
 Set over two weekends in 12th-century Brinkburn Priory in Longframlington, Northumberland, and complemented by two singing workshops

July 2

Hildegard of Bingen Aurora: Songs from the Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum
Sinfonye / Stevie Wishart

July 3

To mark the 300th anniversary of the death of Biber, music by **Schütz**, **Tunder** and **Weckmann** complementing the F minor Requiem by **Biber**
Gabrieli Consort and Players / Paul McCreesh

July 4

Monteverdi 1610 Vespers
Gabrieli Consort and Players / Paul McCreesh

July 9

Haydn String Quartet, Op 76 No 5
Bartók String Quartet No 2
Dvořák String Quartet No 12
The Lindsays

BURY ST EDMUNDS FESTIVAL

May 14-30

+44 (0)1284 769505
 www.buryfestival.co.uk
 The line-up includes contemporary and classical music, outdoor concerts, jazz, dance, comedy and theatre - and a spot of sheep-shearing

May 14

Edmundsbury Cathedral
 World premières of three motets by **Judith Bingham** form part of a choral programme to launch the festival
Cathedral Choir / James Thomas

May 16

Theatre Royal
Richard Rodney Bennett in cabaret

May 17

St Edmundsbury Cathedral
Elgar Introduction and Allegro
RR Bennett Songs Before Sleep. Reflections on a 16C Tune. Jazz and film arrangements
Christopher Maltman bar
Britten Sinfonia / John Wilson

May 18

Theatre Royal
Mozart String Quartet, K590 **Adès** Arcadiana **Mendelssohn** Quartet, Op 80
Endellion Quartet

May 22

St Edmundsbury Cathedral
Gareth Wood Concerto for Harp and Brass Band, plus brass band repertoire
Catrin Finch bp
Grimethorpe Colliery Band

BUXTON FESTIVAL

July 9-25

+44 (0)845 1272190
 www.buxtonfestival.co.uk
 Following a record 2003, Buxton offers an extended programme of opera six productions - afternoon concerts and recitals and literary speakers based in and around the Opera House

July 9, 13, 16, 19, 24

Rossini Il turco in Italia (sung in English)
 Cast includes **Donald Maxwell**, **Michelle Walton**, **Francois Lis**, **Marianne Hellgren Staykov**, **Nicholas Sales**, **Jeremy Huw Williams**, **Philip Sheffield**; **Festival Chorus**; **Northern CO / Wyn Davies**



THE BEAUX ARTS TRIO allow UK audiences to catch up with their new line-up (with Daniel Hope on violin) amid the honeyed stone and elegant porticoes of Bath's Georgian terraces



MARISS JANSONS isn't putting his feet up over the summer: he takes his 'new' orchestras in Munich and Amsterdam across Europe in luscious concerts of Dvořák and Strauss



You can raise a glass to pianist **FREDDY KEMPF** as he plays Mozart and Schubert among the vines of France's claret country at the just-named Orpheus and Bacchus Festival. Santé!

SUMMER FESTIVALS

July 10, 14, 17, 21 25

Handel Hercules

Cast includes **Eric Owens**, Gillian Keith, Yvonne Howard, Andrew Mackenzie Wicks, William Purefoy; Festival Chorus; Symphony of Harmony and Invention / Harry Christophers

July 12, 22

Piazzolla Maria de Buenos Aires

A co-production with Bath and Norwich and Norfolk Festivals brings the first British production of this tango-opera.

Wendy Gadian cond

July 15, 20, 23

Britten The Turn of the Screw

Cast includes Hal Cazalet, Catherine Griffiths, Christine Botes, Rebekah Coffey; English Touring Opera / Michael Rosewell

July 18, 24

Will Todd The Blackened Man (world premiere)

Cast includes Graeme Danby, Valerie Reid, David Barrell, Naomi Harvey. Alistair Dawes cond

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge Summer Music Festival

July 16-August 14

+44 (0)1223 503333 (from May 1)

www.cambridgesummertime.com

A month of music-making at venues across the city covers everything from Biber to Broadway

July 22

St John's College

Fauré Requiem **Rutter** Requiem Choir of Clare College Chapel

July 23

St John's College Chapel

Biber Sonatas featuring trumpets and violins, including the Sonata Sancti Polycarpi for eight trumpets

Vivaldi The Four Seasons - Summer Concerto for Two Trumpets

Trumpet items directed by David Blackadder; Academy of Ancient Music / Pavlo Besnosniuk tr

August 4

West Road Concert Hall

Music by **Bach**, **Bridge**, **Britten**, **Fauré**, **William Lloyd Webber**, **Julian Lloyd Webber**, **Debussy** and **Brahms**

Julian Lloyd Webber tr

Rebecca Woolcock pf

August 5

Emmanuel United Reformed Church

Elgar Day: 'Stirring the Spirit' (7.30pm)

English Piano Trio; **David Graham** (Elgar), **Serena Evans** (Nurse)

9.45 pm: **Elgar** Symphony No 1 (arranged by **Karg-Elert**)

Mark Bebbington pf

August 13

Corn Exchange

Sierra Los destellos de la Resonancia

Psathas Drum Dances

Abe Prism Rhapsody

Stevens Rhythmic Caprice

Evelyn Glennie perc

CASTLE HEDINGHAM

July 16-18, 23-25

+44 (0)1787 460197

www.paulbateman.com

Centred on St Nicholas Church in Castle Hedingham, this first festival in the Essex village is the brainchild of conductor, composer and arranger Paul Bateman; there are six concerts over two weekends

July 16

Schumann Dichterliebe

Britten Holy Sonnets of John Donne

Anthony Rolfe Johnson ten

Paul Bateman pf

July 23

Beethoven Piano Trio No 4,

'Archduke' **Ravel** Piano Trio

Kammerspiel Piano Trio

CASTLEWARD OPERA

June 4-26

Castleward House Co Down

+44 (0)28 9066 1090

www.castlewardopera.com

June 4, 5 (6.30pm), 8, 10, 12

(6.30pm), 13 (6.30pm), 15, 16, 18, 19

(6.30pm), 22, 23, 25, 26 (6.30pm)

DEATH IN CHELTENHAM

Britten's last opera comes to the spa town in a performance conducted by Richard Hickox.

Britten tenor *par excellence*

Philip Langridge sings Gustav

von Aschenbach (right, played

by Dirk Bogarde in Visconti's

Mahler-drenched film). The

festival rounds off with another

Britten opera on a haunting

novella, *The Turn of the Screw*.

THE KOBAL COLLECTION / ALFA



Verdi Rigoletto

Glenville Hargreaves Rigoletto **Mary**

Nelson Gilda **Amos Christie** Duke

Simon Wilding Sparafucile

David Angus cond

June 6 (6.30pm), 9, 11, 17

Britten Albert Herring

Martin O'Hagan Albert Herring

Christine Courtney Lady Billows **Jenny**

Bourke Florence **Pike** Richard Woods

Mr Gedge Michael Brown **Supt Budd**

Brian MacKay cond

CHELMSFORD

Chelmsford Cathedral

May 8-15

+44 (0)1245 359890

www.chelmsfordfestival.org.uk

An intriguing programme at this year's

Chelmsford Festival, which includes

popular orchestral works by Brahms,

Dvorak, Rachmaninov and Sibelius along

side more unusual fare such as Vaughan

L'Amplification performed in a masked

production by 11 April 1998, May 11

CHELTENHAM

Cheltenham International Festival

July 2-18

+44 (0)1242 227979

www.cheltenhamfestivals.co.uk

This year's festival can boast well over 20

world premieres - and that's not counting

17 miniatures written in celebration of

director Michael Berkeley's 10th and

final festival by John Matthews, David

Matthews, Mark-Anthony Turnage and

John Tavener among others

July 2

Town Hall

Britten Death in Venice (semi-staged)

Philip Langridge Gustav von Aschenbach

Alan Opie The Traveller **Michael Chance**

Voire of Apollo BBC Singers; City of

London Sinfonia / Richard Hickox

July 3 (3pm)

St Andrew's Church Toddington

Works by **Machaut** surrounding

pieces by **Delius**, **Elgar** and

Holst (marking the 70th anniversary

of their deaths) and **Harrison**

Birtwistle, **Anthony Gilbert**

and **Schnittke**, including the

premiere of Birtwistle's Orpheus

Elegies

Endymion

July 3

Pittville Pump Room

Anthony Powers Berkeley Miniature

Bartók Sonata for Two Pianos and

Percussion **Holst** The Planets (arr for

two pianos)

Melvyn Tan, **Ronald Brautigam** pfs

Zoltán Racz, **Aurel Hollo** perc

July 10

Town Hall

Bach French Suite No 4. Partita No 1.

English Suite No 6 **Bartók** Suite, 'Out of

Doors' **Beethoven** Piano Sonata No 28

András Schiff pf

July 11

Pittville Pump Room

Mozart String Quartet in F **Kodály** Duo

Mozart Clarinet Quintet

Belcea Quartet, **Michael Collins** cl

July 13

Britten Sinfonia da Requiem **Carter**

Of reworking (European premiere) **Holst**

Egdon Heath **Elgar** Cello Concerto

Lisa Milne / **Susan Narucki** sop

Truls Mørk / **Colin Carr** vc

CBSO / **Martyn Brabbins**

July 16 (10.15pm)

Pittville Pump Room

Tavener Frithjof Schuon settings

Patricia Rozario sop **Schubert** Ensemble

July 17

Everyman Theatre

Edward Rushton Birds, Bones, Barks:

A Trojan Trilogy (world premiere)

The Opera Group Ensemble

July 18 (11.30am)

Pittville Pump Room

Schumann Frauenliebe und -leben

M Berkeley Speaking Silence

Alice Coote mez **Julius Drake** pf

July 18 (6pm)

Town Hall

Britten The Turn of the Screw

Yvonne Kenny Governess **Mark**

Padmore Peter Quint **London Winds**,

Belcea Quartet with **Corin Long** dh

Lucy Wakeford bp **Huw Watkins** pf

Colin Currie perc / **Paul Kildea**

CIRENCESTER

Cirencester Early Music Festival

July 18-24

A week of concerts, instrumental and

vocal recitals, headlined by those masters

of Renaissance vocal polyphony The

Harmonia Ensemble, in a parish church

consecrated in 1178. The final Promenade

Concert, July 24, brings together the

best of the area's young musicians in

instrumental and vocal music including

Vivaldi's Four Seasons, Allman's Organ

Concerto and Handel's Arrival of the Queen

of Sheba arranged for recorders

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

August 15-September 4

+44 (0)131 473 2000

www.eif.co.uk

Great orchestras, world premieres, grand

opera and intimate chamber music -

that's the mix at Edinburgh this year, with

a special focus on Carl Maria von Weber

August 16

Usher Hall

Weber Abu Hassan - Overture.

Konzertstück for Piano and Orchestra.

Grand Duo Concertant. Clarinet

Quintet. Concertino for Horn and

Orchestra. Symphony No 1

Ronald van Spaendonck cl **David Pyatt**

bn **Dejan Lazic** pf **Northern Sinfonia** /

Thomas Zehetmair

August 17

Usher Hall

Weber Der Freischütz

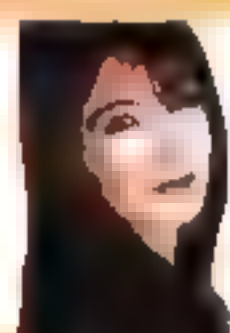
Hillevi Martinpelto Agathe **Ailish**

Tynan Aemchen **Jonas Kaufmann** Max

John Relyea Caspar **Christopher**

Maltman Ottokar **Philharmonia**

Chorus; **SCO** / **Sir Charles Mackerras**



EVELYN GLENNIE takes her battery of percussion and dazzling stage presence to Cambridge's Corn Exchange for a solo recital, mostly of works written especially for her



TANSY DAVIES is one of the UK's brightest young composing talents, and the ever-forward-looking Cheltenham Festival has added to her list of commissions



The **KATONA DUO** have a new Double Guitar Concerto from Cheltenham's retiring director Michael Berkeley. Expect expressive warmth and flying fingers in equal measure

August 18**Usher Hall****Weber** Oberon

Elizabeth Whitehouse *Reiza* Jane
 Irwin *Fatima* Anna Burford *Puck*
 Peter Brondor *Huon* Barry Banks
 Oberon Garry Magee *Scherasmin*
 Scottish Opera Chorus and Orchestra
 / Sir Richard Armstrong

August 19**Usher Hall****Weber** Euryanthe

Anne Schwanewilms *Euryanthe*
 Christine Brewer *Eglantine* Stewart
 Skelton *Adolar* Neal Davies *Lysistr*
 Alfred Reiter *King* Ludwig
 Edinburgh Festival Chorus;
 BBC SSO / David Robertson

August 20**Usher Hall****Mozart** Symphony No 38. Piano

Concertos Nos 12 and 17
 Alfred Brendel *pf*
 SCO / Sir Charles Mackerras

August 20, 28**Edinburgh Festival Theatre**

Debussy *Pelléas et Mélisande*
 Will Hartmann *Pelléas* Alla Kravchuk
 Mélisande Oliver Zwarg *Golaud*
 Hanover State Opera /
 Chao-Chia Lü

August 22**Usher Hall****R Strauss** Capriccio

Soile Isokoski *Countess* Anne Sofie von
 Otter *Clairon* Jonas Kaufmann
 Flamand *Stephan* Loges *Count*
 Christopher Maltman *Olivier*
 RSNO / Leopold Hager

August 23**Usher Hall****Bartók** Divertimento for Strings. Piano

Concerto No 3. Bluebeard's Castle
 Petra Lang *mez* John Relyea *bass*
 Steven Osborne *pf*
 BBC SSO / Ilan Volkov

August 25**Usher Hall****Birtwistle** Night's Black Bird. Shadow

of Night **Schubert** Symphony No 9
 Cleveland Orchestra /
 Franz Welser-Möst

August 26**Usher Hall****Debussy** Jeux **Mahler** Symphony No 7

Cleveland Orchestra /
 Franz Welser-Möst

August 28**Usher Hall****Bach** Orchestral Suite No 2

Beethoven Piano Concerto No 1
 Hindemith Symphony, 'Mathis der
 Maler'

Richard Goode *pf*
 Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra /
 Herbert Blomstedt

August 29 (6pm)**Usher Hall****MacMillan** Le Tombeau de Georges

Roualt. Quickening
 John Scott *org*
 Hillard Ensemble; Edinburgh Festival
 Chorus; RSNO Junior Chorus;
 RSNO / Garry Walker

August 31**Usher Hall****Sibelius** Pohjola's Daughter

Beethoven Piano Concerto No 4
 Rachmaninov Symphonic Dances
 Alexei Lubimov *pf*
 London Philharmonic Orchestra /
 Vladimir Jurowski

September 1, 3, 4**Edinburgh Festival Theatre****Gluck** Orfeo et Euridice

Opera North / Nicholas Kok

September 1**Usher Hall****Beethoven** Bagatelles, Op 126**Schubert** Piano Sonata No 16

Janáček Piano Sonata, 'From the
 Street' **Chopin** Four Mazurkas.
 Nocturne, Op 55 No 2. Ballade No 1
 Richard Goode *pf*

September 2**Usher Hall****Weber** Oberon - Overture**Mozart** Symphony No 34**Bruckner** Symphony No 7

Staatskapelle Dresden /

Bernard Haitink

September 3**Usher Hall****Britten** War RequiemOlga Guryakova *sop* Mark Padmore *ten*Christian Gerhaher *bar*

Paragon Ensemble; BBC SSO /

Ilan Volkov, Garry Walker

MORTY CHILLS OUT

MANFRED ESSER

Are you sitting comfortably?
 Let's hope so if you're in the
 Queen's Hall, Edinburgh on
 September 1 when the German-
 based Auryn Quartet pick up
 their bows to play Morton
 Feldman's String Quartet II.
 This sublimely meditative
 works lasts for up to six hours,
 and is almost entirely *pianissimo*.
 Gluttons for punishment can
 come back the next morning to
 hear the Auryn face the rigours
 of Beethoven's Op 131.

September 4**Usher Hall****Boulez** 12 Notations for Piano. Sur

Incises **Stravinsky** Russian Peasant
 Songs. Les Noces

Cattrin Wyn-Davies *sop* Hilary Summersmez Toby Spence *ten* TigranMartirosian *bass* BBC Singers; Ens

InterContemporain / Pierre Boulez

Queen's Hall morning recitals (11am)include **Schubert**: ElisabethLeonskaya *pf* (August 17, 20, 23); **Bach**,**Schumann**, **Bartók**, **Enescu**: LeonidasKavakos *vn* Denes Varjon *pf* (August 19);**Bartók**, **Schubert**: Zehetmair Quartet(August 25); **Beethoven**, **Tippett**:Steven Osborne *pf* (August 28, 30);**Bach**, **Mozart**, **Debussy**, **Brahms**:Sergey Khachatryan *vn*Lusine Khachatryan *pf***FISHGUARD****Fishguard International****Music Festival****July 23-31**

+44 (0)1348 873612

A strong choral programme in Fishguard
 this summer features Mendelssohn's *Elijah*
 and Mozart's *Requiem*. Another festival
 highlight promises to be Schubert's *Trout*
 Quintet on July 28 with The Landsays and
 pianist John McCabe

GALWAY**Galway Early Music Festival****May 20-23**

+353 (0)87 9305506

www.galwayearlymusic.com

May 20**St Nicholas Collegiate Church**

Music of the Irish Harpers

Kathleen Louchane *hp*Alec Finn *bourz***May 21****St Nicholas Collegiate Church**

Renaissance music from Poland, the

Czech Republic and across Europe

Verboden Vrucht**May 22****St Nicholas Collegiate Church**

Music, song and dance from

Renaissance France, 15th-century

Italy and 17th-century Spain, with

the audience joining in the later Ball

Compagnie Maître Guillaume**GARSINGTON OPERA****June 12-July 11**

+44 (0)1865 361636

www.garsingtonopera.org

Innovative Garsington Opera combines
 well-known operas with little-known works.
 This season there's a British premiere for
 Rossini's *L'Equivoque* stragante, and a
 first professional British production for
 Tchaikovsky's *Cherevichki* as well as Mozart's
 immortal parable of fidelity, *Così fan tutte*

GLYNDEBOURNE**May 20-August 29****Glyndebourne Festival Theatre**

The classiest of opera festivals with one

of the finest opera theatres anywhere, this

year Glyndebourne presents six operas.

There are new productions of Mozart's

Die Zauberflöte (Adrian Noble directs,

Vladimir Jurowski conducts the OAE

with Lisa Milne as *Pamina* and PavolBreslik as *Tamino*) and a double-bill,

directed by Annabel Arden, of

Rachmaninov's *The Miserly Knight* (with

Sergei Leiferkus as the Baron) and

Puccini's *Gianli Schicchi* (Alessandro

Corbelli in the title role and Sally

Matthews as *Lauretta*; Jurowski conducts)Revisals this year are of Debussy's *Pelléas*et *Mélisande*, Handel's *Rodelinda*, Bizet's*Carmen* and Janáček's *Jenůfa***GLOUCESTER****Three Choirs Festival****August 7-14**

+44 (0)1452 312990

www.3choirs.org

It's the turn of Gloucester for this year's

annual festival, which opens with a

ticket-only free event on August 7

August 8 (7.30pm)**Gloucester Cathedral****Knussen** Choral *Delius* Violin Concerto**Vaughan Williams** Symphony No 2

'London' (1913 version)

Tasmin Little *vn*

Philharmonia / Richard Hickox

August 10 (2.30pm)**Pittville Pump Room**Music by **Byrd**, **Gibbons**, **Lawes**,**Purcell**, **Weelkes** and **Goehr**Robin Blaze *countertenor* Fretwork**August 11 (10.30am)****Mary de Lode****Beethoven** Sonata No 31 **McCabe** TwoStudies. Works by **Ravel**, **Ives** and **Noda**John McCabe *pf***August 13 (7.45pm)****Gloucester Cathedral****Howells** King's Herald **Brown**,**Bingham**, **Matthews**, **McCabe**,**R Saxton** Orchestral Variations on

'Down Ampney' (festival commission)

Elgar Cello Concerto. The MusicMakers Catherine Wyn-Rogers *contr***Raphael Wallfisch** *vc* Philharmonia /

Martyn Brabbins

August 14 (11am)**Mary de Lode**

Soprano Catherine Bott and pianist

Jonathan Cohen give a recital on a

London theme, including **Monckton's***Chalk Farm to Camberwell Green*,**Wilson's** *A Room in Bloomsbury*,**Boyce's** *The Pleasures of Spring**Gardens*, **Vauxhall** and **Grainger's***Handel in the Strand***August 13 (7.45pm)****Gloucester Cathedral****Poulenc** Gloria **Beethoven** Symphony

No 9, 'Choral'

Gweneth Ann Jeffers *sop* CatherineWyn-Rogers *contr* James Oxley *ten*Matthew Best *bass* Festival Chorus;

Philharmonia / Martyn Brabbins

GÖTTINGEN**International Handel Festival****May 23-June 1**

+49 (0)551 56700

www.haendel.org

Events at this year's 'baroque-fest' include

a new production of Handel's opera

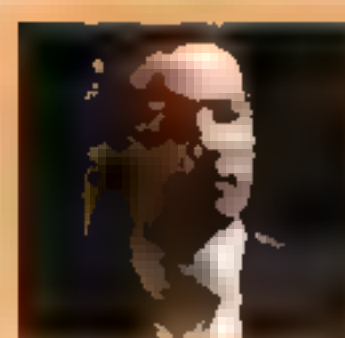
Rinaldo; recitals by countertenors Andreas

Scholl, Kai Wessel and Robin Blaze, and

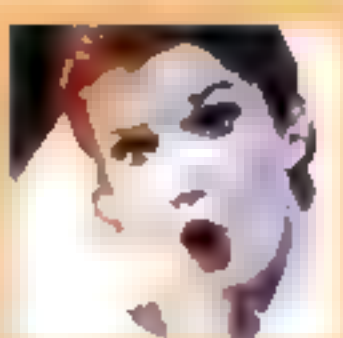
Andreas Staier at the harpsichord

May 23**Hardenberg**Open-air concert: **Handel** Opera arias

and Music for the Royal Fireworks

Dominique Labelle, **Cyndia Sieden***sops* Andrew Foster-Williams *bbar***Concerto Köln** / **Nicholas McGegan****May 26****Stadthalle****Handel** Alexander's Feast**May 27 (6pm), 29, June 1****Stadthalle****Handel** *Rinaldo*Cast includes Alice Coote, **Dominique****Labelle** and **Cyndia Sieden****Cologne Chamber Choir**; **Concerto****Köln** / **Nicholas McGegan****May 28 (10pm)****Stadthalle**Recital by Emma Kirkby *sop*Jakob Lindberg *lute***May 30, 31 (2.30pm)****Stadthalle****Handel** Judas Maccabeus**Cologne Chamber Choir**; **Concerto****Köln** / **Peter Neumann****May 31****Stadthalle****Handel** Opera ariasAndreas Scholl *countertenor***Concerto Köln** / **Nicholas McGegan**

FRANZ WELSER-MÖST
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 Orchestra on their first
 European tour since he
 became principal conductor.
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 Salzburg and Lucerne



ANNE SCHWANEWILMS
 reprises her Glyndebourne
 triumph last year in Weber's
 neglected *Euryanthe*.
 Edinburgh is putting on
 concert performances of
 all three Weber operas



GARSINGTON FESTIVAL
 is a home for witty stagings
 of classics and rarities, espe-
 cially from the pens of Strauss
 and Rossini: the latter's
L'Equivoque stragante gets
 its UK première this year



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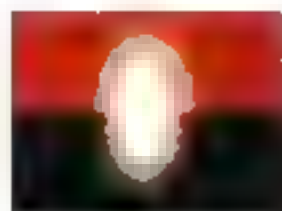
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www.henleyfestival.co.uk

office 01491 843404

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JULY 21 - AUGUST 22, 2004

two one act operas by Kurt Weill

Der Protagonist Royal Palace



Premiere: July 21, 2004 starting time 7.30pm

Festival Opera House

Additional performance:

Sun July 25, Sun August 1 and Sun August 8, 2004, 11.00 a.m.
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2004

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Christopher Hogwood
Jiří Kout
Zdeněk Macal
Sir Charles Mackerras
Heinrich Schiff
Leonard Slatkin

BBC Symphony Orchestra
Czech Philharmonic Orchestra
Gewandhausorchester Leipzig
Brno Philharmonic Orchestra
Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra
Prague Symphony Orchestra

Emanuel Ax
Claudio Bohorquez
Bernarda Fink
Julia Fischer
Ian Fountain
Ivan Klánský
Magdalena Kožená
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Música Florea
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Detailed programme on www.festival.cz

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e-mail: vstupenky@festival.cz or tickets@festival.cz

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P R A G U E S P R I N G



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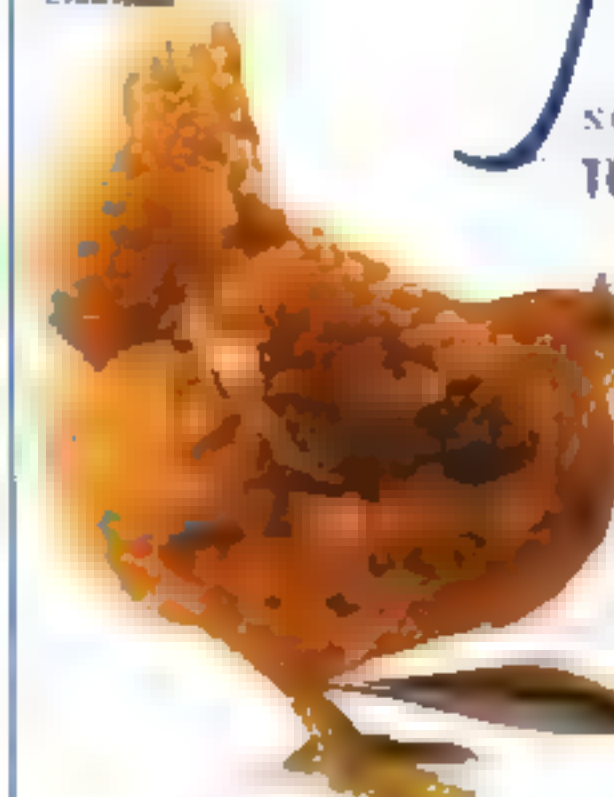
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The SUNDAY TIMES

The Academy of Ancient Music,

Peter Donohoe, John Harle,

Gary Cooper, Florestan Trio,

BBC Singers, Yousuf Ali Khan,

Alfredo Mazzari, Dante Quartet

8-22 May 2004

Newbury Spring Festival

Highlights include:

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

BBC National Orchestra of Wales

Sir Jonathan Miller

The Lindays

Joanna MacGregor

London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble

BBC Concert Orchestra

Belcea Quartet

London Community Gospel Choir

Tommy Smith Jazz Quartet

Florestan Piano Trio

Christopher Maltman

Claire Martin

Richard Rodney Bennett

Tasmin Little

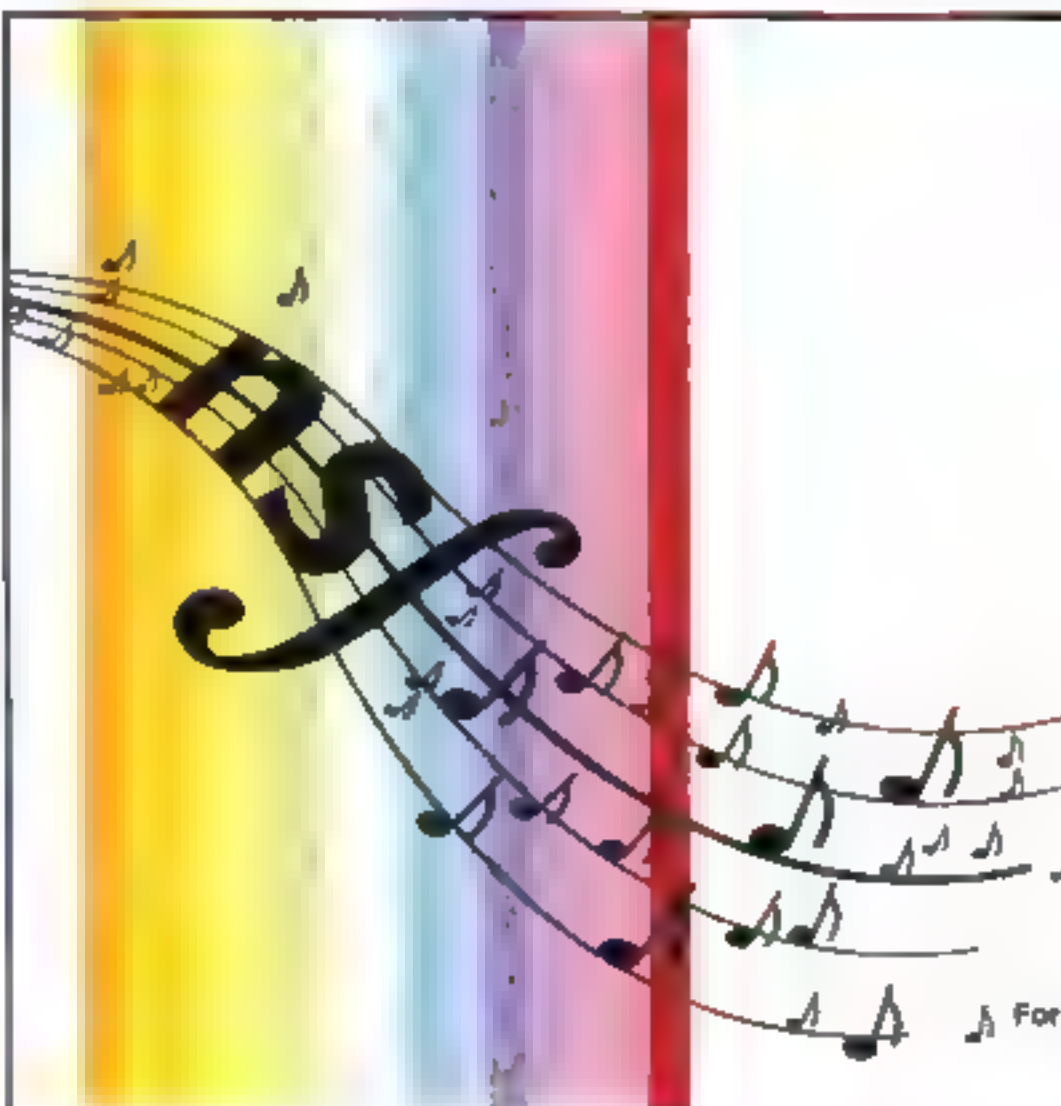
Tenebrae

and many more

For a FREE colour events diary tel: 01635 528766

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box office 01635 522733



GRASSINGTON FESTIVAL

June 18-July 3

+44 (0)1756 752691

www.grassington-festival.org.uk

The eclectic mix at this North Yorkshire festival includes jazz, country music, a big band performance and cabaret – and a drystone-walling course! Classical artists include the London Serenade Ensemble, the Brodsky Quartet and pianists Kathryn Stott and Noriko Ogawa

GUITING FESTIVAL

July 24-31

+44 (0)1242 603912

www.guitingfestival.org

Classical music and jazz features in the popular summer week in the beautiful Cotswold village of Guiting Power

July 26

Schubert Notturmo, D897

Beethoven Piano Trio, Op1 No 3

Brahms Piano Trio No 1

Thames Piano Trio

July 28

Works by Mozart, Schumann, Liszt, Debussy, Rachmaninov, Joplin, Gershwin, Waller and Addinsell
Philip Dyson pf

July 31

Traditional/MacGregor Lost

Highways: Spirituals and Gospels

Piazzolla/MacGregor Six tangos

Bach Goldberg Variations

Joanna MacGregor pf

HASLEMERE

Dolmetsch Festival

July 2-4

+44 (0)1428 642773

www.dolmetsch.com

The re-named Haslemere Festival offers 'A Feast of French Music' this year

July 2

St Bartholomew's Church

Music from the 12th-17th centuries by

Pérotin, Thibaut de Champagne,

Binchois du Caurroy, Du Mont,

Le Jeune and Hotteterre

Sophia Brumfitt sop Ian Gammie lte

Dolmetsch Consort

July 3

St Bartholomew's Church

Music from the Courts of Louis XIV

and XV, including works by Marais,

Couperin, Rameau, Hotteterre,

de Visée, Boismortier

Jeanne Dolmetsch rec/viol

Marguerite Dolmetsch rec/viol

Ian Gammie lte Caroline Ritchie viol

Andrew Pledge bpd Gerald Gifford org

Rachel Gregory, Brian Blood recs

HARROGATE

Harrogate International Festival

July 22-August 7

+44 (0)1423 537230

www.harrogate-festival.org.uk

July 28

Harrogate Theatre

Tasmin Little vn Martin Roscoe pf

July 29

Harrogate Theatre

Bach, Beethoven, Brahms

Heinrich Schiff vc Roger Vignoles pf

August 6

Harrogate International Centre

Mendelssohn Overture, 'The Hebrides'

Beethoven Piano Concerto No 5,

'Emperor' Dvořák Symphony No 9,

'From the New World'

John Lill pf RLPO / Libor Pešek

HENLEY FESTIVAL

July 7-11

+44 (0)1491 843404

www.henley-festival.co.uk

July 7

Floating Stage

Programme includes:

Bruch Violin Concerto No 1

Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No 2

Chloë Hanslip vn Stephen de Pledge pf

Bournemouth SO /

Nicolae Moldoveanu

July 8

Floating Stage

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa sop sings

operatic arias, popular songs, and

arrangements of traditional Maori songs

RPO / Robin Stapleton

July 10

Floating Stage

Classical hits from Henley's fireworks

spectaculars – including:

Wagner The Ride of the Valkyries (with

real Valkyries!) Saint-Saëns Symphony

No 3, 'Organ' (final movement)

Respighi The Pines of Rome

Gweneth-Ann Jeffers sop Reading

Phoenix Choir; Trinity College brass

players; RPO / Nicolae Moldoveanu

THAMES-SIDE FROLICS

There's something quintessentially English about messing about on the river, with the requisite dose of champagne and, in this case, music to while away the hours. Chloë Hanslip, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Gweneth-Ann Jeffers are among those aiming to ensure you feel your maritime hours are well spent.

April 30

Royal Pump Rooms

Richter Quartet, Op 5 No 1

Janáček String Quartet No 1, 'Kreutzer

Sonata' Dvořák Piano Quintet

Panocha Quartet, Marian Lapsanský pf

May 1

All Saints

Dvořák Requiem

Ingrid Atrott sop Eva Garajová mez

Lynton Atkinson ten Matthew

Brook bass Royal Leamington Spa

Bach Choir; OUP Choir;

Warwickshire SO / Janet Lincé

May 3 (3pm)

Royal Pump Rooms

Dvořák Folk Songs, Gypsy Songs,

Four Songs Op 82, Biblical Songs

Eva Garajová mez

Marian Lapsanský pf

May 4

Royal Pump Rooms

Dvořák String Quartet No 10, String

Sextet Janáček String Quartet No 2,

'Intimate Letters'

Martínů Quartet, Miroslav

Schnoutka vn Petr Hejny vc



HENLEY FESTIVAL 2003

KILLALOE MUSIC FESTIVAL

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July 21-25

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www.icorch.com

July 21

St Flannan's Cathedral

Britten Les illuminations

Rameau Les Indes galantes

Dominique Labelle sop

Irish CO / Nicholas McGegan

July 23

St Flannan's Cathedral

Programme to include:

Vivaldi Recorder Concerto

Horacio Franco rec

Irish CO / Nicholas McGegan

July 24

St Flannan's Cathedral

Programme to include:

Dvořák String Quartet No 12,

'American'

Dominique Labelle sop Horacio

Franco rec Nicholas McGegan bpd

Quartetto Stradivari

LEAMINGTON FESTIVAL

April 30-May 9

+44 (0)1926 496277

www.warwickarts.org.uk

Leamington honours Janáček (born 1854)

and Dvořák (died 1904) with one of the

biggest festivals of Czech music outside

the Czech Republic. Midday, afternoon

and evening concerts and recitals

May 6

Holy Trinity

Vilem Tausky Coventry

Sylvie Bodorová Terezin Ghetto

Requiem Mozart String Quintet No 1

Martínů Quartet, Nigel Cliffe bar

Miroslav Schnoutka vn

LA CORUNÁ

Festival Mozart, La Coruña, Spain

May 20-July 3

+34 902 434443

www.festivalmozart.com

This year's festival in Northern Spain

includes six opera productions, orchestral

concerts, chamber music and solo recitals

May 20 (9pm)

Palacio de la Ópera

Beethoven Missa solemnis

Ruth Rosique sop Iris Vermillion mez

Joan Cabero ten Peter Mikulas bar

Palau Chamber Choir; Madrid

Community Choir; Galicia SO /

Victor Pablo Pérez

May 29 (9pm)

Teatro Rosaia Castro

Petrassi, Dallapiccola, Nono, Berio

Luisa Castellani sop

Soloists from the Galicia SO

June 4, 6

Palacio de la Ópera

Mozart La finta giardiniera

Ruth Rosique Sandra José Zapata

Podestá Bruce Sledge Belfiore Carmela

Remigio Arminda

Galicia Symphony Orchestra /

Gustav Kühn

June 20 (9pm)

Auditorio de Santiago

Rossini La Donna del Lago

Juan Diego Flórez Giacomo Jano

Tamar Elena Daniela Barcellona

Malcolm Robert McPherson Rodrigo

Prague Chamber Choir;

Galicia SO / Alberto Zedda

June 26 (9pm)

Teatro Rosaia Castro

Chopin Five songs Rossini Cantata,

Giovanna d'Arco Moniuszko Six songs

Dvořák Gypsy songs

Ewa Podles contr Annia Marchwinska pf

LEICESTER

Leicester Early Music Festival

May 24-June 11

+44 (0)116 2709984

www.earlymusicleicester.co.uk

Concerts, recitals, workshops and

children's events in locations including

St Mary De Castro Church, the Guildhall

and Leicester Cathedral. Highlights

include a concert by recorder virtuoso

Michala Petri and her husband, lutenist

and guitarist Lars Hannibal, playing works

by Corelli, Handel, Bach and Vivaldi

(June 5, St Mary De Castro)

LEICESTER

Leicester International

Music Festival

June 11-20

+44 (0)116 255 4854 (except De Montfort

Hall, (0)116 233 3111)

www.musicfestival.co.uk

The themes of this year's festival are

'Women in Music', 'Clara and Robert

Schumann and their circle', and

instrumental music by composers known

for their song-writing. Composer-in-

residence Thea Musgrave's music features

in many recitals and the festival ensemble

includes top soloists and chamber musicians

June 11

New Walk Museum

Trad/MacGregor Lost Highway

Musgrave Excursions

Piazzolla/MacGregor Six Tangos

Bach Goldberg Variations

Joanna MacGregor pf

June 12

New Walk Museum

Schubert String Trio Movement

Poulenc/Farrall Sonata for oboe

and clarinet C Schumann Piano Trio

Musgrave Ring Out Wild Bells

Schumann Piano Quartet

Festival Ensemble

June 16 (1pm)

New Walk Museum

Schubert Variations on Trockne

Blumen, Die schöne Müllerin

Mark Padmore ten Festival Ensemble

June 20

De Montfort Hall

Janáček Taras Bulba Dvořák Cello

Concerto, Symphony No 6

Han-Na Chang vc

Philharmonia / Sir Charles Mackerras

LICHFIELD FESTIVAL

July 7-18

+44 (0)1543 412121

www.lichfieldfestival.org

The didgeridoo as soloist with symphony

orchestras one of the musical highlights

this year. It's played in the European

premiere of the Requiem by Peter

Sculthorpe, the Australian composer-in-

residence this year. The cathedral provides

the backdrop for many concerts with the

100th anniversary of Dvořák's death

marked in midday chamber music

performances – with the Skampa Quartet

among others – in the Lady Chapel



GWENETH-ANN JEFFERS
dons the diva costume for
the last night of the Henley
Festival. This young British
soprano has been making a
name for herself at the Royal
Opera House and elsewhere

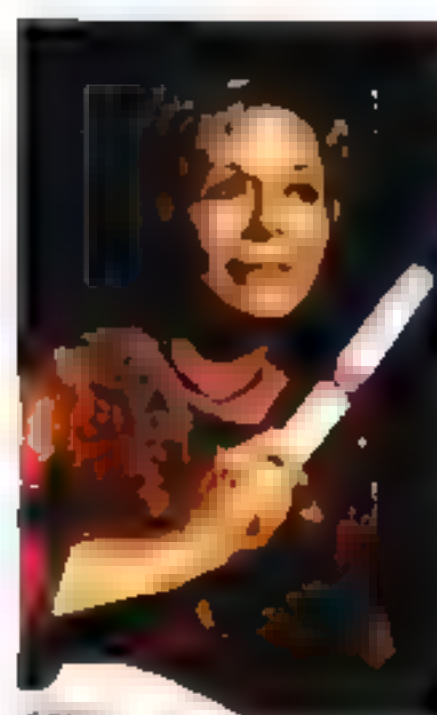


You wonder if Rossini com-
posed his high tenor roles
knowing that **JUAN DIEGO**
FLOREZ would come along
one day. He appears the
composer's setting of Walter
Scott's Lady of the Lake



HAN-NA CHANG
Her Prokofiev garnered a
Gramophone Award: now
hear her play Dvořák's Cello
Concerto in Leicester with
that doyen of Czech music,
Sir Charles Mackerras

St George's Bristol



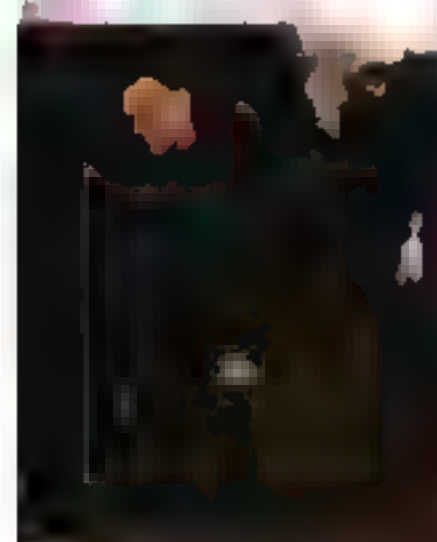
Friday 23 April 7.30pm
ST GEORGE'S DAY GALA EVENT

The Loves of Shakespeare's Women

SUSANNAH YORK actress / narrator
SOPHIE YATES virginals
RICHARD BOOTHBY viol and lyra viol

Acclaimed actress Susannah York presents an entertaining and affectionate survey of the Bard's most famous and infamous heroines with popular music of the period from Sophie Yates and Richard Boothby.

Tickets £8-£25



Friday 7 May 7.30pm

Julian Lloyd Webber cello

Rebecca Woolcock piano

One of the most creative artists of his generation offers a rich and varied programme which includes Fauré's moving *Elegy* and his affectionate tribute to Jacqueline du Pré, *Jackie's Song*.

Tickets £8-£20



Friday 14 May 7.30pm

SHADES OF CHOPIN

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LATE NIGHT SAX...& PIANO

SAT 10 NATIONAL YOUTH JAZZ ORCHESTRA
WITH GUEST SINGERS JACQUI DANKWORTH & IAN SHAW

MON 12 CBSO AND EX CATHEDRA
BACH'S MAGNIFICAT & THE EUROPEAN PREMIERE OF PETER SCULTHORPE'S REQUIEM

TUE 13 ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC
A BIBER ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMME PLUS VIVALDI & ZELENKA

WED 14 LONDON COMMUNITY GOSPEL CHOIR
WITH TROMBONIST DENNIS ROLLINS

THU 15 PAUL LEWIS & STEVEN OSBORNE
BEETHOVEN, SCHUBERT, DEBUSSY & KURTAG FOR 2

FRI 16 SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA/ LEWIS/OSBORNE
MOZART'S DOUBLE PIANO CONCERTO, DVORAK & TCHAIKOVSKY

SAT 17 SCO/RASCHER SAXOPHONE QUARTET
BEETHOVEN 7, SIBELIUS & BRETT DEAN'S WATER MUSIC (UK PREMIERE)

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www.lichfieldfestival.org

July 11

Lichfield Cathedral ♥

Crumb Vox Balaenae (Voice of the Whale). Black Angels **Schubert** String Quartet No 14, 'Death and the Maiden'

Spiegel Quartet; Concord

July 13

Lichfield Cathedral

Vivaldi The Four Seasons – Summer, and other concertos

Biber Sonatas **Zelenka** Fanfares

AAM / Pavlo Beznosiuk

July 15

Lichfield Cathedral

Debussy 6 Epigraphes Antiques.Children's Corner **Kurtág** Three

Jatekok. Three Bach Transcriptions

Beethoven Piano Sonata No 27**Schubert** Fantasie

Paul Lewis, Steven Osborne pfs

July 17

Lichfield Cathedral

Beethoven Coriolan Overture.Symphony No 7 **Sibelius** Scene withCranes. Valse Triste **Brett Dean** Water

Music (UK premiere)

Rascher Saxophone Quartet

SCO / Joseph Swensen

LONDON

Almeida Opera

July 1-18

+44 (0)20 7359 4404

www.almeida.co.uk

Cutting-edge opera and the launching pad for many high-profile careers

The North London theatre is staging *The**In Passion* by Sir Harrison Birtwistle after

its Aldeburgh premiere. Performances on

July 6, 7, 8 and 10. Michael Nyman's

newest opera, *Man and Boy*. Dada

receives its UK premiere on July 15, 17

and 18. Ten years younger is John

Woolrich, Almeida Opera's director, a

half-century is marked by a new song cycle.

LONDON

BBC Proms

July 16-September 11

www.bbc.co.uk/proms

The 110th Henry Wood Promenade

Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall.

See website for full listings

LONDON

Lufthansa Baroque

May 18-June 29

+44 (0)20 7222 1061

www.lufthansafestival.org.uk

This year's festival theme is 'Behind the Mask: Music for Commedia and Carnival'

May 29

St John's, Smith Square

Charpentier Extremum Dei iudicium.

Salve Regina. Le Malade imaginaire

Ensemble Européen William Byrd /

Graham O'Reilly

June 3

St John's, Smith Square

English 'mad songs' from Restoration

theatre, dramatised by Susannah Waters,

including **Purcell**, **Eccles** and **Arne****Catherine Bott** sop David Owen**Norris** hpd Mark Levy va da gamba

June 5

St John's, Smith Square

Includes: **Pergolesi** La Serva padrona**Sammartini** Recorder Concerto**Roberta Invernizzi** sop Wolfgang**Newarla** bar Musica Alta Ripa

June 10

St John's, Smith Square

Orazio Vecchi L'Amfiparnaso**I Fagiolini** / Robert Hollingworth

June 12

St John's, Smith Square

Handel Acis and Galatea **Sophie****Daneman** sop Paul Agnew ten James**Gilchrist** ten Alan Ewing bass Freiburg**Baroque Orchestra and English****Voices** / Ivor Bolton

June 14

St John's, Smith Square

Includes: **Banchieri** Barca di Venetiaper Padova **Marenzio** Se quel dolor**Ensemble Clément Janequin** /**Dominique Visse**

June 18 (6.45pm)

Westminster Abbey

Handel Jephtha**Carolyn Sampson** sop Diana Moore mez**Charles Humphries** countertenor**Paul Agnew** ten Alan Ewing bass**Westminster Abbey Choir and St****James's Baroque** / James O'Donnell

COLLIN WILLOUGHBY

The Rhinemaidens cometh... to the Longborough Festival

Longborough's acclaimed shortened Ring cycle, performed over two weekends in June, brings Wagner's legendary characters to the Cotswolds. The opera house, with its Palladian façade and views across the Evenlode valley, also hosts Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, and *Figaro's Wedding*, an English translation of Mozart's great work.

LONDON

Opera Holland Park

June 18-August 7

+44 (0)845 230 9769

www.operahollandpark.com

This year's productions are Bellini's *Norma*

(June 8, 11, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25), Puccini's

La Fanciulla del West (June 10, 12, 15, 17,19, 22, 24, 26), Puccini's *La bohème* (June

29, July 1, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17), Strauss's

Die Fledermaus (July 1, 3, 6, 8, 10 (2pm),14, 16), Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (July

20, 22, 26, 28, 30), August 2, 4, 6), Verdi's

Luisa Miller (July 22, 24, 27, 29, 31), August3, 5, 7). The *Sinfonia of London* are in the pit

LONDON

Spitalfields Festival

June 7-25

+44 (0)20 7377 1362

www.spitalfieldsfestival.org.uk

Renowned for its top-flight performers and warm atmosphere, the Spitalfields Festival sticks to its trusted formula of an eclectic mix of concerts alongside education and community events. Many concerts – across 12 venues – are free and all have tickets at £5 or less. Seven celebrate the thriving Bangladeshi community in the east London area, and there's a Judith Weir premiere

June 7

Wilton's Music Hall

Bach Well-Tempered Klavier, Book 2**Gary Cooper** hpd

June 8

Wilton's Music Hall

Beethoven Piano Trio Op 1 No 1 **Weir**Piano Trio (première) **Ravel** Piano Trio**Florestan** Trio

June 10

Wilton's Music Hall

Byrd, Purcell Songs and consorts**Geraldine McGreevy** sop **Phantasm**

June 11 (9pm)

Brady Centre

'Latin Meets America', with works by

Richard Rodney Bennett, **Granados**,**Falla**, **Arlen** and **Sondheim****Barbara Rearick** mez**Sir Richard Rodney Bennett** pf

June 14

Shoreditch Church

Complete orthodox service from the

18th century

Russian Patriarchate Choir, Moscow

June 15 (9pm)

Shoreditch Church

Bartók String Quartet No 6 **Sohal** new

work (Festival commission)

Sally Silver sop **Sanju Sahai** tabla**Dante** Quartet

June 16

Wesley's Chapel

Debussy Estampes **Ravel** Miroirs**Messiaen** La Fauvette des Jardins**Franck** Prelude, aria and fugue**Peter Donohoe** pf

June 17

Shoreditch Church

Music from the Genevan Psalter, and

by **Sweelinck**, **Humfrey**, **Tallis**,**Nivers**, **Monteverdi**, **Charpentier****Ex Cathedra** / **Jeffrey Skidmore**

June 22 (6.30pm)

Shoreditch Church

Handel Trio Sonatas**Sonnerie** / **Monica Huggett** vn

June 25

Shoreditch Church

Monteverdi 1610 Vespers**RAM Baroque Orchestra and****Singers** / **Laurence Cumunings**

LONDON

Proms at St Jude's

June 12-20

+44 (0)20 8458 4166

www.stjudes.org.uk

June 12

Beethoven Egmont – Overture**Rachmaninov** Piano Concerto No 2**Mendelssohn** Symphony No 4, 'Italian'**Alessio Bax** pf**South Bank Sinfonia** / **Simon Over**

July 13

Organ recital by **Dame Gillian Weir**

July 15

Beethoven String Quartets – Op 18

No 6; Op 59 No 3; Op 127

Endellion Quartet

June 17

Recital by pianist **Peter Donohoe**

June 20

'Last Night of the Proms'

Programme includes works by **Rossini**,**Elgar**, **Parry**, **Henry Wood** and **Grieg**

(Piano Concerto) and spirituals by

John Rutter

LONGBOROUGH

Longborough Festival Opera

July 2-17

+44 (0)1451 830292

www.longboroughopera.com

Wagner returns to the Cotswolds – and

Sir Donald McIntyre returns to *Wotan*

The celebrated bass leads a fine cast in

Longborough Festival Opera's acclaimed

shortened Ring cycle, being staged over

two weekends in June and two in July, in

addition to the country house festival's

summer productions

July 2, 3, 7, 9, 14, 16 (all 6.30pm)

Mozart Figaro's Wedding (in English)Cast includes **Adrian Powter** Figaro**Adam Green** Count Almaviva**Caroline Childe** Countess Almaviva**Jonathan Lyness** cond

July 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17

(all 6.30pm)

Puccini Madama ButterflyCast includes **Melinda Hughes****Butterfly** **Mark Luther** Pinkerton **Craig****Smith** Sharpless **Cari Searle** Suzuki**Jonathan Lyness** cond

June 18, July 23

Wagner Das Rheingold

June 19, July 24 (both 6.30pm)

Wagner Die Walküre

June 25, July 30

Wagner Siegfried

June 26, July 31

Wagner GötterdämmerungCast includes **Donald Macintyre***Wotan* **Jenny Miller** Brünnhilde**Nicholas Folwell** Alberich **Peter****Bronder** Loge, *Mime* **Peter Jeffes***Siegfried* **Richard Lloyd Morgan***Günther* **Anthony Negus** cond

LUCERNE FESTIVAL

August 13-September 19

+41 (0)41 226 4480

www.lucernefestival.ch

August 13

Concert Hall

R Strauss Four Last Songs**Wagner** Tristan und Isolde – Act 2

(concert performance)

Renée Fleming sop**Violeta Urmana** *Isolde* **Mihoko****Fujimura** Brangäne **Ben Heppner***Tristan* **René Pape** King Marke**Lucerne FO** / **Claudio Abbado**

August 15 (6.30pm)

Concert Hall

Mahler (arr Schoenberg)

Das Lied von der Erde

Anna Larsson contr **Jorma Silvasti** ten**Mahler** CO / **Daniel Harding**

August 18, 19 ♥

Concert Hall

Beethoven Piano Concerto No 4**Mahler** Symphony No 5**Maurizio Pollini** pf **Lucerne Festival****Orchestra** / **Claudio Abbado**

August 20

Concert Hall

Rossini Guillaume Tell – Overture**Haydn** Symphony No 100, 'Military'**Shostakovich** Symphony No 15**Cleveland Orchestra** /**Franz Welser-Möst**

SPITALFIELDS FESTIVAL

A variety of venues in the multi-cultural area of East London host boundary- and genre-crossing concerts alongside an array of educational and community events



RASCHER SAXOPHONE QUARTET

The German ensemble play a commission by ex-BPO violist Brett Dean in the atmospheric setting of Lichfield Cathedral



BEN HEPPNER

An evening of high passion in Lucerne (also offering Renée Fleming in the Four Last Songs) sees Heppner sing Act 2 of *Tristan und Isolde* with Violeta Urmana

the **Two Moors FESTIVAL**

A Dartmoor to Exmoor Music Festival taking place in rural churches.

16-23 October



Artists:
 Geraldine McGreevy,
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 Simon Ible, Stephanie Hughes, Julius Drake,
 Stephen Stirling, The Clerks' Group, John Lenehan,
 The Britten Sinfonia, Nicholas Cleobury, Leon McCawley,
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FONDAZIONE PRO MUSICA E ARTE SACRA

III Festival Internazionale di Musica e Arte Sacra

with and the

Wednesday October 20, 2004, 5.00 pm
 Basilica St. Peter in the Vatican
 Solemn Holy Mass
 with Gregorian chant
 Choir of St. Peter's Basilica
 (Cappella Giulia)
 Conductor: Fabio Colino

Thursday October 21, 2004, 8.30 pm
 Basilica St. Paul outside the walls
 works by A. Caldara, A. Vivaldi, W. A. Mozart and Ferd. and Fr. Schubert
 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
 Male Choir of the Vienna Staatsoper
 Vienna Boys Choir
 Conductor: Riccardo Muti

Friday October 22, 2004, 8.00 pm
 Basilica St. John Lateran
 G.F. Handel, *The Messiah*
 New College Choir Oxford
 The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
 Conductor: Edward Higginbottom

Saturday October 23, 2004, 9.00 pm
 Basilica St. Mary Major
 A. Dvořák, *Sabat Mass* op. 58
 Symphony Orchestra Prague
 Philharmonic Choir Prague
 Conductor: Petr Altmajer

Saturday November 6, 2004, 9.00 pm
 Basilica of the Pontifical Shrine of the Holy House, Loreto
 The concert will be performed in order to celebrate the inauguration of the German Chapel of the Loreto Shrine after its restoration financed by the Fondazione.

Partner:
DaimlerChrysler Italia

For information contact:
 Associazione Internazionale Amici della Musica Sacra
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 e-mail: info-sac@amsi.it www.amsi-musica-sacra.com www.festivalmusicasacra.net

A black and white portrait of conductor Gianandrea Noseda, smiling and looking slightly to the right. He is wearing a dark, high-collared jacket. His hands are clasped in front of him.

Saturday 29 May 2004, 7pm

The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester

Maestro

Gianandrea Noseda conducts

Tchaikovsky
The Queen of Spades

(concert performance)

with soloists from the Mariinsky Theatre (Kirov Opera), joined by the BBC Singers and the BBC Philharmonic

"The *Queen of Spades* delivers an enormous dramatic punch; it is darker and more haunted than *Eugene Onegin* with music of far greater complexity and daring psychological undercurrents. I am so pleased to be bringing together musicians from two great organisations close to me in Tchaikovsky's masterpiece, one of my favourite operas."

Gianandrea Noseda

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www.bbc.co.uk/philharmonic



Buxton



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The Sunday Telegraph

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Britten
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DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY
Silver Arts Festival
22nd May - 5th June 2004

Come and enjoy some great live entertainment
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during the Dumfries & Galloway Silver Arts
Festival 22nd May - 5th June 2004

Willard White recital with songs from opera
The shire, Parrot Catherine Edwards, St Georges Church
Dumfries, Saturday 22nd May

Piano Recital by Lada Vales
8 supper, Bayside House, Dumfries, Saturday 23rd May

Canto Vivo! Claire Debon
& Simon Thacker (music)
Hall on the Pier, Gatehouse of Fleet, Friday 28th May
Bayside House, Dumfries, Saturday 29th May

Independent Ballet Wales -
Sleeping Beauty
Theatre Royal, Dumfries, Saturday 30th May

Childrens Classic Concert with SCO and the
Dumfries & Galloway NYCOs Childrens Choir, Dumfries Hall
Dumfries, Saturday 30th May

For full details and where to buy tickets
see www.dgartsfestival.org.uk or call 01387
260447 to receive a full programme by post.

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Moon, Sun and All Things Music from 17th century Latin America
Mr John Tavener - World Premiere
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The Philharmonia Orchestra
conductor Tugan Sokiev
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Symphony No 2 - Rachmaninov
Try, The Beloved Country (Johannesburg
Theatre)
Kweto Gospel Choir

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Canterbury Festival Office, Christ Church Gate, The Friars
Canterbury, Kent CT1 2EE

August 21 (11am)**Lukaskirche**

Debussy 12 Etudes **Ligeti** Musica Ricercata No 1 **Birtwistle** Harrison's Clock Nos 2, 3 and 5 **Ravel** Le Gibet **Bartók** Night Music **Ligeti** Etude No 13 **Pierre-Laurent Aimard** *pf*

August 23**Concert Hall**

Hindemith Chamber Music, Nos 1 – 'Finale 1921', 4 and 5
Beethoven Symphony No 1
Kolja Blacher *vm* **Wolfram Christ** *va*
Mahler CO / **Claudio Abbado**

August 24**Concert Hall**

Beethoven Piano Concerto No 1, Symphony No 3, 'Eroica'
Staatskapelle Berlin / **Daniel Barenboim** *pf*

August 26**Concert Hall**

Beethoven Fidelio
Waltraud Meier *Leonore* **Ben Heppner** *Florestan* **Falk Struckmann** *Pizarro*
René Pape *Rocco* **Staatskapelle Berlin** Chorus and Orchestra / **Daniel Barenboim**

August 29 (6.30pm)**Concert Hall**

Mendelssohn Symphony No 4, 'Italian'
Brahms Symphony No 2
Bavarian RSO / **Mariss Jansons**

August 30**Concert Hall**

Mozart Symphony No 41, 'Jupiter'
Bruckner Symphony No 7
Staatskapelle Dresden / **Bernard Haitink**

September 2 ♥**Concert Hall**

Schoenberg Variations for Orchestra
Beethoven Symphony No 9, 'Choral'
Christiane Oelze *sop* **Birgit Remmert** *contr* **Jonas Kaufmann** *ten* **John Relyea** *bass* **Schweizer Chamber Choir**, **BPO** / **Sir Simon Rattle**

September 3**Concert Hall**

Debussy La mer
Messiaen Eclairs sur l'Au-delà...
BPO / **Sir Simon Rattle**

September 4**Lucerne Hall**

Birtwistle Theseus' Game **Huber** Die Seele Muse vom Reittier steigen...
Kai Wessel *countertenor* **Christophe Coin** *bar* **Walter Grimmer** *vc*
Ensemble Modern / **Pierre-André Valade** / **Martin Brabbins** / **Heinz Holliger**

September 6**Concert Hall**

Wagner Orchestral excerpts
Shostakovich Symphony No 11
VPO / **Valery Gergiev**

September 7**Concert Hall**

Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No 3
Tchaikovsky Symphony No 5
Yefim Bronfman *pf*
VPO / **Valery Gergiev**

September 9**Concert Hall**

Beethoven Piano Concerto No 3
Schubert Sketches for a Symphony – Andante. Symphony No 5
Maria João Pires *pf*
Royal Concertgebouw / **Philippe Herreweghe**

September 10**Concert Hall**

Honegger Symphony No 3, 'Liturgique'
Strauss Ein Heldenleben
Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra / **Mariss Jansons**

September 12**Concert Hall**

Charpentier David et Jonathas
Cyril Auvity *David* **Jeffrey Thompson** *La Pythonisse* **Paul Agnew** *Joabel*
Les Arts Florissants / **William Christie**

September 13**Concert Hall**

Music by **Chopin** and **Debussy**
Maurizio Pollini *pf*

September 15**Concert Hall**

Salieri Songs and arias
Cecilia Bartoli *mez*
Freiburg Baroque Orchestra

September 16 ♥**Concert Hall**

Birtwistle Earth Dances **Kyburz**
Noesis Schoenberg Piano Concerto
Boulez Notations
Maurizio Pollini *pf*
Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra / **Pierre Boulez**

ROSSINI CELEBRATED

Back to turn of the millennium (and not the recent one) Syracuse for Rossini's *Tancredi*, the opera with three endings (which one will they play?) It opens this year's festival dedicated to the composer, held in the Adriatic coastal city of Pesaro. Running in rep will be *Elisabetta*, *Regina d'Inghilterra* and *Matilde di Shabran*.

**September 17****Concert Hall**

Bruckner Symphony No 8
Munich PO / **Zubin Mehta**

LUDLOW FESTIVAL

June 19-July 7

+44 (0)1584 872150

www.ludlowfestival.co.uk

Musical highlights of this year's festival include the Orchestra of St John's (June 29) and the London City Opera's production of Puccini's *Tosca* (July 1) – all at St Laurence's Church. The Guilford Quartet play lunchtime concerts at St John's Church, Gower Hall (July 5), All Saints Church, Richards Castle (July 6), St Laurence's Church (July 8), and an evening concert at Moor Park School (July 7).

LYRIQUE-EN-MER FESTIVAL

July 24-August 18

+33 (0)297 315959

www.belle-ile.net

Western France's major summer opera festival, on Belle Île, off the Brittany coast, offers Bizet's *Carmen* (July 27, 30, August 3, 7, 10) and Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (August 5, 9, 16, 18) at the Citadelle Vauban.

MORITZBURG FESTIVAL

August 8-22

+49 (0)351 810 5495

www.moritzburgfestival.de

Young chamber musicians meet to study and perform near Dresden. Following a week-long workshop, they will give eight concerts in Moritzburg's city church and Baroque castle.

NEWBURY SPRING FESTIVAL

May 8-22

+44 (0)1635 522733

www.newburyspringfestival.org.uk

May 8**St Nicolas Church****Haydn** The Creation

Janice Watson *sop* **Mark Padmore** *ten*
Ashley Holland *bar* **Newbury Festival** Chorus; **Orchestra of St John's** / **John Lubbock**

May 9**St Mary's Church, Shaw**

Ibert Trios Pieces Breves **Poulenc** Trio, Sextet **Saint-Saëns** Caprice sur des airs danois **Francaix** L'Heure du Berger
Roussel Divertimento
London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble / **Pascal Rogé** *pf*

May 12**Englefield House, Theale**

Beethoven Piano Trio No 1 **Saint-Saëns** Piano Trio No 1 **Dvořák** Piano Trio No 3
Florestan Trio

OUNDLÉ INTERNATIONAL

July 9-18

+44 (0)1832 272026

www.oundlefestival.org.uk

The Nene Valley's summer festival gets underway with a 'Carnival of the Seasons', with the musicians of Red Priest.

June 9**Parish Church**

Vivaldi Four Seasons, with 'Spring' music from **Biber**, 'Summer' music from **Van Eyck** and **Purcell**, 'Autumn' music from **Bach** and **Le Strange**, and 'Winter' music from **Corelli**
Red Priest

July 11**Parish Church**

Ibert Trois Pièces Brève **Farkas** Early Hungarian Dances **Carrapatoso** Cinco Elegias **Mozart** Adagio and Allegro for a clockwork organ
Ligeti Bagatelles **Berlioz** Opus Number 3
Zoo Hallam Dance Suite
The Galliard Ensemble

July 17**Oundle School Chapel**

Janáček Otche Nash **Glennie** A Little Prayer **Zivkovic** Ilijas **Schmidt** Miniatures **Masson** Prim **Stevens** Rhythmic Caprice **Abe** Michi **Bernstein** Chichester Psalms
Girling The Prodigal Son
Evelyn Glennie *perc* **Armonico Consort**

OXFORD

Charivari Agréable Early Music by Candlelight' Summer Festival

July 11-August 20

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www.charivari.co.uk

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PESARO

Rossini Opera Festival**August 6-20**

+39 (0)721 3800 291

www.rossinioperafestival.it

August 6, 9, 12, 15, 18**Palafestival**

Rossini *Tancredi*
With **Vessilina Kasarova** and **Eva Mei**
Prague Chamber Choir; **Galicia** Symphony Orchestra / **Victor Pablo Pérez**

August 7, 10, 13, 16, 19**Auditorium Pedrotti**

Rossini *Elisabetta*, *Regina d'Inghilterra*
Cast includes **Maniola Cantarero**, **Sonia Ganassi**, **José Bros**, **Antonino Siragusa**; **Prague Chamber Choir**; **Teatro Comunale Orchestra**, **Bologna** / **Renato Palumbo**

August 8, 11, 14, 17, 20**Teatro Rossini**

Rossini *Matilde di Shabran*
With **Hadar Halevy**, **Annick Massis**, **Bruno di Simone**, **Juan Diego Flórez**
Prague Chamber Choir; **Galicia SO** / **Riccardo Frizza**

PRAGUE SPRING FESTIVAL

May 12-June 3

+420 296329 999

www.festival.cz

May 12, 13**Municipal House**

Smetana Má vlast
Prague SO / **Jiří Kout**



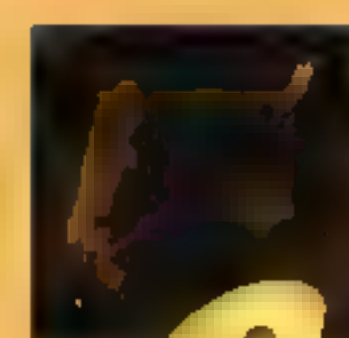
DANIEL BARENBOIM

The pianist-conductor combines his two talents once again when he takes the Berlin Staatskapelle to play Beethoven in the hall on the shores of Lake Lucerne.



SIMON RATTLE

and Berlin's 'other' orchestra also hit Lucerne (and Salzburg and London) with Beethoven's Ninth and the glories of Messiaen's last tribute to his beloved birds.



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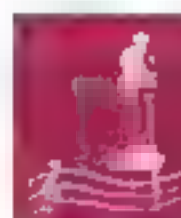
- Joe Duddell *Mnemonic* – a new work for flute, harp and string orchestra
- A new work for trumpet and organ by John Pickard

Artists include

Sorrel Quartet	Fidelio Piano Quartet	Jennifer Bate
Alison Balsom	Iwan Llewelyn-Jones	Katherine Baker
Suzanne Willison	Susie Self	Damian Thantrey
Sarah-Jane Bradley	Sine Nomine Singers	Festival Orchestra

Brochures available early May 2004 from:
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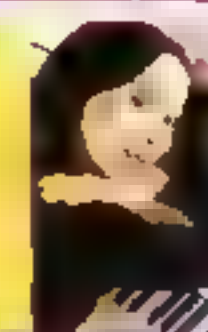
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www.buryfestival.co.uk

Festival

St. Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL



May 15, 16

Municipal House

Dvořák St Ludmila, oratorio
Eva Urbanová *sop* Bernarda Fink *mez*
Peter Mikuláš, Aleš Bricein *basses*
Prague Philharmonic Choir; Czech
PO / Jiří Bělohlávek

May 19

Municipal House

Mozart Piano Concerto No 17
Shostakovich Symphony No 11
Emanuel Ax *pf*
BBC SO / Leonard Slatkin

May 22

Municipal House

Pavel Blatný Erbeniáda (world
première) **Dvořák** Piano Concerto
Janáček Glagolitic Mass
Helena Kaupová *sop* Eva Blahová *mez*
Jan Vacík *ten* Rafael Siwek *bar*
Garrick Ohlsson *pf* Martin Jakubiček
org Czech Philharmonic Choir Brno;
Brno PO / Petr Altrichter

May 23

Municipal House

Niimi The Cosmic Tree (Path of Soul)
Mendelssohn Violin Concerto
Dvořák Symphony No 8
Keiko Nosaka *koto* Keiko Urushihara *vm*
Nagoya PO / Hideaki Muto

May 28

Rudolfinum

Bach Piano Concerto, BWV1052
Mozart Adagio and Fugue, K546, Piano
Concerto No 21, Symphony No 39
ASMF / Murray Perahia

May 24

Municipal House

Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No 3
Dvořák Symphony No 2
Karel Košárek *pf*
Nagoya PO / Tomáš Hanus

May 26

Rudolfinum

Kabeláč Symphony No 4, Chamber
Haydn Keyboard Concerto in D,
Symphony No 59, 'Fire'
Prague CO / Trevor Pinnock *hpd*

May 31

Municipal House

Dvořák Symphony No 1, 'The Bells of
Zlonice', Violin Concerto
Kurt Nikkanen *vm*
Prague SO / Richard Hickox

June 2

Rudolfinum

Songs by **Novak**, **Schulhoff**, **Debussy**,
Poulenc, **Kočeluh**, **Wolf**
Magdalena Kožená *mez*
Malcolm Martineau *pf*

PRESTEIGNE FESTIVAL

August 26-31

+44 (0)1544 267800

www.presteignefestival.com

Musical traditions and contemporary in 16
concerts. French music (Durufle and late
Debussy among others) is explored.
Judith Weir is composer-in-residence,
and there are premieres of two festival
commissions.

August 26

St Andrew's Church

Elgar Serenade **Duddell** 'Mnemonic'
for flute, harp and string orchestra
(Festival commission, world première)
Poulenc Organ Concerto **Bartók**
Divertimento for string orchestra
Katherine Baker *f* Suzanne
Willison *hp* Jennifer Bate *org*
Presteigne Festival Orchestra /
George Vass

August 27

St Andrew's Church

Beethoven String Quartet, Op 18 No 4
Pickard String Quartet No 3
Hoddinott Scena **Ravel** String Quartet
Sorrell Quartet

August 30

St Andrew's Church

Works by **Constant**, **Debussy**,
Hoddinott, **Oskare Lindbergh**, **John**
Pickard (world première of a Festival
commission), **Eben**, **Poulenc**, **Weir**,
Mathias and **Vivaldi**
Alison Balsom *tp* Jonathan Scott *org*
Iwan Llewelyn-Jones *pf*

August 31

St Andrew's Church

Mathias Divertimento for string
orchestra **Beethoven** Piano Concerto
No 2 **McCabe** Rainforest II
Mozart Symphony No 40
Iwan Llewelyn-Jones *pf* Presteigne
Festival Orchestra / George Vass



SERGEY KUZNETSOV

Many festivals aren't complete
without a final firework-led
extravaganza: the English city
of Salisbury would obviously
agree. Catherine Wheels and
Roman Candles - originally
inspired by martyrdom, not
mirth - will once again explode
over the tallest spire in the
UK on June 5, while musicians
including Georgie Fame keep the
crowds below entertained with
a mix of jazz, Latin and folk.
Bring your best ooohs and aaahs.

SALISBURY FESTIVAL

May 14-June 6

+44 (0)1722 320333

www.salisburyfestival.co.uk

Classical music forms a major part of a
popular festival that also covers world
music, jazz, dance and theatre, and
outdoor events in the Cathedral Close.

May 22

Salisbury Cathedral

A 'Flamenco Requiem' commissioned
from **Paco Peña** by the Salisbury
Festival, featuring Peña, singers,
guitarists, a dancer
Festival Chorus / Howard Moody

May 24

St Thomas Church

Music by **Bach** and **Beethoven**
Angela Hewitt *pf*

May 28

Salisbury Cathedral

Exploring the early Italian/English music
tradition, with works ranging from

Corelli to **Tippett**, and including a
new commission by **Piers Hellawell**
Hilliard Ensemble; Britten Sinfonia

May 29

Romsey Abbey

Bach Harpsichord concertos
Academy of Ancient Music

In other chamber music concerts, the
John Harle Saxophone Quartet play
Weill, among others, at St Martin's
Church (May 27), the Nash Ensemble
play **Beethoven** and **Ravel** at Wilton
Church (June 1), guitarist John Williams
adds Venezuelan and African music to
a programme which features **Bach** and
Scarlatti in St Thomas' Church (June 3),
and the Brodsky Quartet play the two
Janáček string quartets at The
Playhouse (June 5)

SALZBURG FESTIVAL

July 24-August 31

+43 (0)662 8045 500

www.salzburgfestival.at

July 24 (11am), July 25 (9pm)

Grosses Festspielhaus

Ives Central Park in the Dark
Korngold Violin Concerto **Dvořák**
Symphony No 9, 'From the New World'
Benjamin Schmid *vm*
VPO / Seiji Ozawa

July 24, 26, 28 August 1, 3, 5, 7
(6pm), 22, 23, 25 (6pm)

Felsenreitschule

Purcell King Arthur
Barbara Bonney, Isabel Rey *sops* Birgit
Remmert *cont* Michael Schade *ten*
Vienna Concentus Musicus /
Nikolaus Harnoncourt

July 25, 27, 29, 31, August 2

Kleine Festspielhaus

Mozart Die Entführung aus dem Serail
Cast includes Regina Schörg, Konstanze
Laura Aikin, Blonche Christoph Strehl
Belmonte Peter Rose *osmin*
Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra /
Marcello Viotti

July 30 ♥

Felsenreitschule

Ligeti Atmosphères, Requiem
Mahler Symphony No 10 - Adagio.
Totenfeier
Bamberg Symphony Chorus and
Orchestra / Jonathan Nott

July 30, August 4, 7, 10, 13, 16,
19, 22, 25, 29

Grosses Festspielhaus

Mozart Così fan tutte
Tamar Iveri *Fioriligi* Elina Garanca
Dorabella Ramón Vargas *Ferrando*
Nicola Olivieri *Guglielmo* Helen
Donath *Despina* Thomas Allen
Don Alfonso VPO / Philippe Jordan

August 3

Stiftskirche St Peter

Mozart Mass in C minor
Diana Damrau, Genia Kuhmeier *sops*
Dietmar Kerschbaum *ten* Christopher
Maltman *bar* Tölzer Boys Choir;
Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra /
William Christie

August 9, 11 (both 6.30pm)

Felsenreitschule

Prokofiev War and Peace
Dmitri Hvorostovsky *bar* Anna
Netrebko *sop* Ekaterina Semenchuk
mez Larissa Shevchenko *sop*
Mariinsky Kirov Choir and Orchestra
/ Valery Gergiev

August 12

Felsenreitschule

Dvořák Cello Concerto
Sibelius Symphony No 5
Mischa Maisky *vc*
LSO / Sir Andrew Davis

August 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30

Kleine Festspielhaus ♥

Korngold Die tote Stadt
Cast includes Torsten Kerl, Paul Angela
Denoke, Marietta Bo Skovhus, Frank
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra /
Donald Runnicles

August 17

Kleines Festspielhaus

Songs by **Dvořák**, his friends and pupils
Barbara Bonney *sop* Michelle Breedt
mez Thomas Hampson *bar* Georg
Zeppenfeld *bass* Wolfram Rieger *pf*

August 18, 21 ♥

Kleines Festspielhaus

Bellini I Capuleti e i Montecchi
Anna Netrebko *Giulietta* Daniela
Barcellona *Romeo* Joseph Calleja
Tebaldo Dan Dumitrescu *Capellio*
Chester Patton *Lorenzo*
Vienna State Opera Chorus; Salzburg
Mozarteum Orchestra / Ivor Bolton

August 20

Kleines Festspielhaus

Korngold Symphonic Serenade
Beethoven Piano Concerto No 3,
Symphony No 8
Olli Mustonen *pf* Deutsche
Kammerphilharmonie / Paavo Järvi

August 26

Kleines Festspielhaus

Stravinsky Jeu de cartes **R. Strauss**
Four Last Songs **Korngold** Symphony
Soile Isokoski *sop*
Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra /
Bertrand de Billy

August 30

Grosses Festspielhaus

Debussy Le mer
Messiaen Eclairs sur l'Au-delà...
BPO / Sir Simon Rattle

August 31

Grosses Festspielhaus

Schoenberg Variations for Orchestra
Beethoven Symphony No 9, 'Choral'
Christiane Oelze *sop* Birgit Remmert
cont Jonas Kaufmann *ten* John Relyea
bass Berlin Radio Choir;
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra /
Sir Simon Rattle

Song Recitals in the Mozarteum:

Cecilia Bartoli *mez* June 28;
Christopher Maltman *bar* August 2;
Soile Isokoski *sop* August 4;
Karita Mattila *sop* August 7;
Dmitri Hvorostovsky *bar* August 14;
Violeta Urmana *mez* August 17;
Waltraud Meier *mez*; August 20;
Thomas Quasthoff *bar* August 25

SAVONLINNA FESTIVAL

July 9-August 8

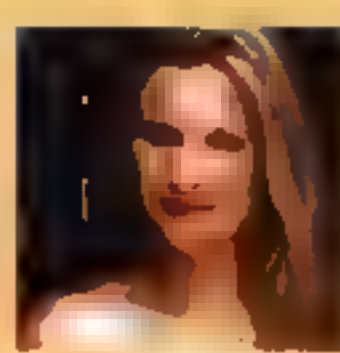
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www.operafestival.fi

The spectacular backdrop of Savonlinna's
15th-century castle in the far north of
Finland generates guaranteed atmos-
phere as backdrop to productions of
Wagner's Flying Dutchman, Puccini's
Turandot and Verdi's Un ballo in maschera
as well as the rather less-often heard
The Demon by Anton Rubinstein.
There are also song recitals from
Karita Mattila and Savonlinna veteran
Jorma Hynninen.

PRAGUE SPRING FESTIVAL

The city's most prominent art
nouveau building is the site
of the Smetana Hall, where
some of this year's complete
Dvořák symphony cycle can
be heard



ALISON BALSOM

The trumpeter making waves
on both the new and early
music scenes gives a recital
at the Presteigne festival to
include Vivaldi and a John
Pickard first performance



MIAH PERSSON

Sophie in Strauss's Der
Rosenkavalier could be the
perfect vehicle for Persson's
poised soprano: find out this
year at Salzburg

JUNE 2002 – MAY 2003



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Teatro Rosalia Castro, 21 and 23 May
E. CAVALLI Gli amori d'Apollo e di Dafne

Palacio de la Ópera, 4 and 6 June
W. A. MOZART La finta giardiniera

Teatro Rosalia Castro, 11 and 13 June
W. A. MOZART Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots
G. ROSSINI La cambiale di matrimonio

Palacio de la Ópera, 18 June
Auditorio de Galicia - Santiago de Compostela, 20 June
G. ROSSINI La donna del lago, in concert

Palacio de la Ópera, 1 and 3 July
G. DONIZETTI L'elisir d'amore

Palacio de la Ópera, 11 May
Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia
L. v. BEETHOVEN Missa Solemnis

Teatro Rosalia Castro, 11 May
Massimiliano Damerini, piano

Teatro Rosalia Castro, 28 May
Alba Ventura, piano

Teatro Rosalia Castro, 5 June
Tedy Papavrami, violin

Teatro Rosalia Castro, 24 June
Nicolai Lugansky, piano

Teatro Rosalia Castro, 2 July
Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia

Colegiata de Santa María, 30 May
Trío de Cuerda Manuel Quiroga
Colegiata de Santa María, 3 June
Orquesta de Cámara de la Sinfónica de Galicia
Colegiata de Santa María, 19 June
Solistas de la Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia

Teatro Rosalia Castro, 25 June
Cuarteto Keller

Teatro Rosalia Castro, 27 June
Cuarteto Keller

Teatro Rosalia Castro, 11 May
Luisa Castellani, soprano
Teatro Rosalia Castro, 12 June
Silvia Tró Santafé, mezzosoprano

Teatro Rosalia Castro, 21 June
Marie-Ange Todorovitch, mezzosoprano

Teatro Rosalia Castro, 26 June
Ewa Podles, contralto

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SUMMER FESTIVALS

SCHWARZTENBURG

Schubertiade

+43 (0)5576 72091

www.schubertiade.at

Founded in 1976, the festival now offers 20 events and boasts 30,000 visitors. The programme is divided into four periods. English tenor Ian Bostridge and friends, who include soprano Dorothea Röschmann, mezzo Angelika Kirchschlager and baritone Thomas Quasthoff decamp to Austria for a long weekend from April 29 to May 2. Their programmes include songs by Schubert, Schumann, Beethoven and Brahms, plus chamber works.

May 20-May 23

Angelika-Kauffmann

May 21

Mozart String Quartet No 22

Bartók String Quartet No 2

Smetana String Quartet, 'From my life'

Hagen Quartet

May 23

Mozart String Quintets Nos 3 and 4

Urbaner String Quartet No 3

Alban Berg Quartet,

Tabca Zimmermann *va*

June 10-June 12

Angelika-Kauffmann-Saal

The main summer Schubertiade starts with a Cecilia Bartoli arias recital with the Musische Nave, and the series continues with cellist Heinrich Schiff joining the Alban Berg Quartet for Schubert's String Quintet.

June 13

Schubert Die schöne Müllerin

Matthias Goerne *bar* Eric Schneider *pf*

June 15

Schubert Schwanengesang

Matthias Goerne *bar* Alexander

Schmalcz *pf*

June 17

Mozart Fantasia K396 (completed

Stadler), Sonata Nos 3 and 4

Schubert Three Klavierstücke,

Beethoven Sonata No 30

Alfred Brendel *pf*

June 19

Alfred Brendel and son, cellist Adrian

Brendel perform chamber works by

Beethoven

June 25 (4pm) ♥

Gramophone Record of the Year winners, the Zehetmair Quartet, perform Bach, Britten and Schubert

August 27-September 12

Angelika-Kauffmann-Saal

The final, late summer fortnight sees performances of Schubert's three great song cycles.

August 27

Schubert Winterreise

Ian Bostridge *ten* Leif Ove Andsnes *pf*

August 28 (11am)

Schubert Schwanengesang

Thomas Quasthoff *bar* Justus Zeyen *pf*

September 1 (4pm)

Music by Schubert, Brahms

and Duparc

Angelika Kirchschlager *mez*

Helmut Deutsch *pf*

September 3

Music by Schubert, Mozart

and Haydn

Anne Sofie von Otter *mez*

Andreas Staier *pf*

September 12

Schubert Die schöne Müllerin

Christoph Prégardien *ten*

Hilko Dumno *pf*

SHEFFIELD

Music in the Round

May 8-15

+44 (0)114 249 6000

www.musicintheround.co.uk

The Lindsays' penultimate May Festival in Sheffield is a 'Farewell to Haydn' as they play the majority of the mature string quartets in conjunction with Haydn's piano sonatas and chamber works. All concerts in the Crucible Studio Theatre.

May 9 (11am)

Haydn The Seven Last Words

May 10

Haydn Piano Sonatas Nos 31, 32, 54

and 56, Capriccio, Variations on the

hymn 'Gott Erhalte'

Ronald Brautigam *pf*

May 13

Haydn Piano Trios Nos 18, 21, 23

and 26, Trio in B flat

Gould Piano Trio

May 15 (12.45pm)

Haydn Symphonies Nos 92 and 104,

'London' (two-piano versions)

Benjamin Frich, Peter Hill *pf*

FAREWELL TO THE LINDSAYS

One of the UK's best-loved ♥ string quartets (in György Gordon's new portrait, right) sign off at their Sheffield home after almost 40 years together. They have chosen to do so with a feast of Haydn, playing more than a third of his 76 string quartets within a week! Devotees of the quartet's Haydn cycle on ASV will know what to expect: a willingness to follow Haydn's restless imagination at every step.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY LONDON



ST ENDELLION FESTIVAL

July 27-August 6

+44 (0)1208 880298

www.endellion.org.uk

At the time of going to press, details were being finalised for this year's concerts at St Endellion Church near Port Isaac in North Cornwall and at Truro Cathedral, where the programme on August 2 includes Respighi and Dvorak's Cello Concertos, other works planned include Mendelssohn's Violata Die Erste Walpurgisnacht and Janáček's sextet Mladí, and three concert performances of Puccini's Tosca.

VERBIER FESTIVAL

July 16-August 1

Leif Médran

Orchestral concerts in the foothills of the Swiss Alps as the world's top soloists meet to play chamber music in one of the most picturesque and idyllic settings of the summer season.

July 16

Grieg Piano Concerto

Shostakovich Symphony No 7,

'Leningrad'

Leif Ove Andsnes *pf*

UBS Verbier Festival Youth

Orchestra / Valery Gergiev

July 22

Schubert Winterreise

Thomas Quasthoff *bar* James Levine *pf*

July 25

Brahms Violin Concerto

Mahler Lieder eines fahrenden

gesellen

Schumann Piano Concerto

Thomas Quasthoff *bar* Joshua Bell *vn*

Martha Argerich *pf* UBS Verbier

Festival Youth Orchestra /

James Levine

July 29 ♥

Strauss Till Eulenspiegel

Schoenberg Erwartung

Schubert Symphony No 9, 'Great'

Anja Silja *sop* UBS Verbier Festival

Youth Orchestra / James Levine

August 1

Mahler Symphony No 2, 'Resurrection'

ibc *sop* Marjana Lipovšek *mez*

Czech Radio Chamber Choir; UBS

Verbier Festival Youth Orchestra /

James Levine

WEST CORK FESTIVAL

June 26-July 4

+353 (0)27 52788

www.westcorkmusic.ie

July 3 (10.30pm) ♥

Bantry House

Janáček Diary of one who

disappeared (trans Heaney)

Christopher Gillett *ten* Méav Ní

Mhaolchatha, Deirdre Moynihan *sops*

Ruby Philogene, Niamh O'Connell

mezz Joanna MacGregor *pf*

WARWICK FESTIVAL

June 25-July 4

+44 (0)1926 496277

www.warwickarts.org.uk

Warwick Festival's Silver Jubilee year focuses on Spanish and Latin American themes with theatre and dance programmes, midday chamber and guitar recitals and evening choral and orchestral concerts, followed by a 'Festival Extra' on July 5-10.

June 25

St Mary's

South American Baroque

choral works

Ex Cathedral / Jeffrey Skidmore

June 27

Pergolesi La Serva Padrona

Dibdin The Ephesian Matron

Opera Restor'd

July 3, 4

Warwick Castle

Fireworks Concert

City of Birmingham Symphony

Orchestra / John Wilson

July 10

All Saints Leamington

Bernstein Chichester Psalms Girling

The Prodigal Son Janáček Otce nas,

Percussion solos by Zivkovic, Schmidt,

Masson and Stevens

Evelyn Glennie *perc*

Armonico Consort

YORK EARLY MUSIC

July 2-10

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This year's festival marks the 300th anniversary of the deaths of two great late 17th-century composers - Charpentier and Biber. Charpentier's 'explorations' from France, and in particular Paris, from medieval times, the focus on Biber - his 'Mystery' sonatas are planned - leads to new and ensemble string music in the Austrian Viennese tradition. Artists include Ensemble 175, directed by Chiara Banchini; the Bachius Consort, directed by Andrew Krumpholtz; the Choral Consort and Players, directed by Paul McCreech, and Sonance.

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NEXT MONTH IN

GRAMOPHONE

THE CLASSICAL MUSIC MAGAZINE

Cover

Leonard Bernstein as conductor is the focus of a special edition from DG featuring his recordings of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Sibelius and 'The Americans'. A group of *Gramophone's* writers discusses the releases and asks where Bernstein stands in the conducting 'hall of fame'.

Interviews

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of perhaps American music's greatest original, Charles Ives, the pianist **Pierre-Laurent Aimard** has recorded the *Concord Sonata* and a group of songs with Susan Graham and shares his admiration of Ives's music with us. **Bernarda Fink** discusses her new collection of songs by Dvořák, and countertenor **David Daniels** defends his assault on the mezzo repertoire with Berlioz's *Les nuits d'été*.

Reputations

John Steane looks back over the career and recordings of the Swedish soprano **Elisabeth Söderström**, a much-loved singer, a fine actress and latterly an inspiring teacher.

Collection

Patrick O'Connor has been languishing in the company of the numerous versions of Ravel's *Shéhérazade* in the month that sees a first recording of the work by Anne Sofie von Otter, a strong contender no doubt...

Reviews

Mahler's Fourth from **MTT** • **David Finckel** and **Wu Han's** *Arpeggione Sonata* • Solo Shostakovich from **Vladimir Ashkenazy** • **Willard White** pays tribute to Paul Robeson • Handel's *Siroe, Re di Persia* from **Andreas Sperling** • **William Christie's** *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* on DVD



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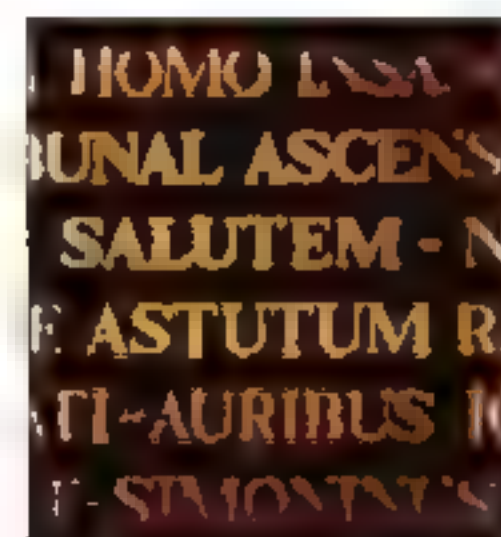


CLIVE BARDA

VERDI'S SIMON BOCCANEGRA

HEAVY LIES THE HEAD

One of Verdi's most telling baritone heroes reveals the perils of kingship. Alan Blyth sorts out the heirs apparent from the pretenders on disc



Boccanegra was a flop when presented in its first form at La Fenice in 1857. The reviews were predominantly unfavourable. Verdi wrote to his friend, the Countess Maffei – 'I've had a fiasco in Venice almost as great as that of *La traviata*'. In succeeding years it was a success only when Verdi was in the pit. As Julian Budden comments in *The Operas of Verdi, Volume 2* (Cassell: 1978), it is 'a hard, gritty work, spare in its vocal writing and uncompromising in expression; but it was not a work of which its composer had any reason to be ashamed'.

It was Verdi's publisher, Ricordi, who persuaded him to revise it. It was to be the composer's first cooperation with Arrigo Boito, who refashioned and vastly improved the libretto. The revision, far more radical than that of *Macbeth*, appears to

have taken rather less than six weeks and included the masterly Council Chamber scene that ends Act 1. The collaboration proved a success, with composer and author working easily in harmony. The première, with a cast superior to that of 1857, including Maurel as Boccanegra and Tarnagno as Gabriele, took place at La Scala, and was a reasonable success; but the work still failed to enter the regular repertory.

It was only in the 1930s, when lesser-known Verdi began to be unearthed, that the opera caught the public's imagination. It was staged, in a version by Franz Werfel in Berlin and Vienna in 1930, but it was the 1932 Metropolitan production that really excited opera-goers. That's hardly surprising given the cast – Lawrence Tibbett, Giovanni Martinelli, Ezio Pinza and Maria Müller (later Elisabeth Rethberg), conducted by Tullio Serafin.

Italy followed with stagings at La Scala in 1933 and Florence in 1938. In 1948 Norman Tucker put on the work at Sadler's Wells, a production that aroused interest and excitement in a forgotten masterpiece. Excerpts were recorded by EMI, now transferred to CD (Dutton CDLX7024). Covent Garden first staged it, with Tito Gobbi as Simone, in 1965.

In spite of these successes, the work is still not quite a repertory piece. That may be explained by its dour, not easily comprehended story, dark-hued scoring, want of easily hummable melodies (Boccanegra has no aria) and preponderance of lower voices, but it is prized highly by Verdi aficionados for its special *tinta* and the rounded title-role, a gift for a dramatic and sympathetic baritone. The other parts offer fine chances for accomplished singing-actors with the resources to do them justice.

Historic Met performances

Some excerpts from the 1939 Met broadcast under Ettore Panizza are available on Pearl, but this and the 1935 broadcast have been badly served on record. My EJS LP set of 1939 confirms the general opinion of Tibbett's Boccanegra as encompassing every aspect of his part. Pinza is a nonpareil of a Fiesco, commanding and vocally imposing. Rethberg (Amelia) and Martinelli (Gabriele), with that inimitable voice of tempered steel, occasionally sound their age, but in terms of Verdian style they are as impeccable as their lower-voiced colleagues: all offer grand, broadly phrased, linear singing such is seldom heard today.

In the 1950 revival, recently issued by Preiser, Fritz Stiedry – who actively assisted the cause of Verdi in Germany before the war – was at last allowed by Rudolf Bing to conduct Verdi, rather

than Wagner. He proves himself steeped in the whole ethos of the work and persuades his dedicated orchestra to disclose all the graphic images in the score. In the title-role, Leonard Warren takes time to find his form, but when he does so, he gets to the heart of the character and commands the opera by virtue of tonal warmth and subtle inflection of the text. Astrid Varnay, in her first Amelia, has thought herself into the vocal and histrionic possibilities of the role, although her voice was never the ideal instrument for Verdi. The young Richard Tucker is a model Gabriele Adorno, exuding ardour in his vital declamation, part of a most convincing performance all-round. After a rather indeterminate account of 'Il lacerato spirito', Mihály Székely becomes an increasingly authoritative Fiesco. Giuseppe Valdengo's sharp-tongued Paolo is second cousin to his Iago.

Frank Guerrara, Ford for Toscanini's broadcast of *Falstaff*, is above average as the Doge, strong and compact in tone, in the Tibbett-Warren tradition. If not quite as compelling as either of his predecessors, he has an appealingly plangent timbre. Giorgio Tozzi's Fiesco is the one disappointment. Ezio Flagello, the imposing Paolo, might have taken on the senior duties. Sound is excellent mono.

Silveri's and Gobbi's Doge

The first studio recording came from Cetra in 1951. **Francesco Molinari-Pradelli** offers a somewhat routine reading. As Amelia, the young Antonietta Stella sings more coarse notes than sweet ones. Paolo Silveri is a forthright Boccanegra but not a subtle or noble one. Carlo Bergonzi, then in his first year as a tenor (he had previously been a baritone), sings with his customary sense

voice, once heard, is unforgettable, nowhere more so than in this deeply thought-through portrayal.

Beside him is his brother-in-law, Boris Christoff, a justly famed Fiesco. His is another voice of individual timbre, and he deploys it here with magnificent authority to portray the patrician's implacable animosity to Boccanegra. Their encounters are irreplaceable examples of vivid, acutely accented operatic dialogue. As for Fiesco's recitative and aria in the Prologue, I doubt if it has been sung, even by Alexander Kipnis or by Pinza, with such understanding or feeling as by Christoff.

The Amelia of Victoria de los Angeles is more controversial. There is no doubting the gentle eloquence she brings to Amelia's role (especially in the recognition duet), the beauty of her tone or her technical assurance, exemplified in her perfect trill at the close of the Council Chamber

the most gratifying Amelia on disc, bringing her keenly phrased, seductive singing to bear on the role, portraying with softly sympathetic tones a vulnerable girl in love. With Domingo as Gabriele by her side, their Act 1 duet and cabaletta offer some of the most beautiful sounds in this survey. Later her doubts and emotions are equally well portrayed, as she adopts a different manner for her roles as lover and daughter. Gian Piero Mastromei is a fiery villain as Paolo. Raimondi is disappointing: hollow in tone, ill-defined in diction. Gavazzeni offers a vivid reading, judged by Andrew Porter in his original review to be 'at once fiery and wise'.

For many, however, it was eclipsed by Abbado's version of 1977, deriving from Giorgio Strehler's staging for La Scala which those lucky enough to see it are never likely to forget. The Milanese orchestra and chorus

Opposite: Alexandru Agache as the Doge in Elijah Moshinsky's production for the Royal Opera House.

Below: the pivotal Council Chamber scene, only added by Verdi in his revision of the opera after its coolly received première



The 1960 revival, once available on Memories, is significant for various reasons. It represents one of **Dmitri Mitropoulos's** last operatic undertakings before his untimely demise later that year. His is just the kind of viscerally exciting account you would expect. Zinka Milanov's first Amelia comes perilously late in her career but she manages to give much pleasure through her sense of style alone, and through obedience to Verdi's dynamic markings that many ignore. Carlo Bergonzi offers a sovereign Gabriele, Verdian singing of a faultless calibre, even if Martinelli's fiery delivery is missing. With Mitropoulos urging them on, he and Milanov deliver the Act 2 duet and its scampering cabaletta more accurately and more pertinently than any other pair of lovers. The succeeding scene with her father is just as fine, albeit foreshortened by cuts.

of Verdian style, but is not quite the confident artist heard at the Met in 1960. Mario Petri as Fiesco is the pick of the soloists; thorough and thoughtful, he is the only one to take notice of Verdi's dynamic markings. Walter Monachesi is a properly scheming Paolo.

Monachesi takes the same role in the much-admired 1957 EMI set, made in Rome with the city's opera company. The mono sound is nothing special – EMI was then still eschewing stereo – but it is good enough to convey the import of a now-historic performance. It boasts Gobbi in one of his most telling roles. On it he lavishes all his gifts for detailed characterisation. His sympathy in the recognition duet with Amelia, stentorian authority in commanding the Genoese Council at the end of Act 1, and the pathos and tragedy of the Doge's prolonged demise are all affecting. Gobbi's plangent

concertato, but for all that her voice sometimes seems a size too small. Giuseppe Campora has the required ardour for Gabriele. Although he, like his Amelia, has a lyric rather than a dramatic voice of the order of Martinelli or Plácido Domingo, he makes a convincingly impulsive aristocrat. What the whole cast has is that specific way with the Italian text rarely encountered now. So it's a pity that **Gabriele Santini's** conducting is rather routine and that the orchestra is so recessed.

Gavazzeni and Abbado

It was not until 1973 that the earliest stereo recording, made under **Gianandrea Gavazzeni** in Rome for RCA, appeared. Although Piero Cappuccilli's forthright, and sympathetic Simone was not the fully formed interpretation it became under Claudio Abbado four years later, it is formidably satisfying. Katia Ricciarelli is probably

outstrip their Roman counterparts in technical competence, confidence and rhythmic attack, and **Abbado** offers a more interventionist and positive reading than Gavazzeni. He is alert to every facet of this wondrous score, timing every scene to near perfection.

With the stage experience behind him, Cappuccilli brings even more commitment and variety to Boccanegra, suggesting all the Doge's command and depth of feeling. His breath-control is truly fabulous: he takes some passages in one sweep where other baritones need three or even four breaks. José Carreras, at the peak of his career, sings Gabriele in a personal, plangent way that makes him preferable even to Domingo. On the other hand, Mirella Freni, for all her vocal command, isn't as moving or detailed an Amelia as Ricciarelli, although she becomes more involved and involving in Act 2. As Fiesco, Nicolai Ghiaurov exudes



Amelia's transformation from innocent lover to determined daughter makes for one of Verdi's more fascinating heroines. She is here sung (left) by Kiri te Kanawa at the Royal Opera and (right) Karita Mattila in Peter's Stein's production for the Maggio Musicale in Florence: both are on DVD

ESSENTIAL BOCCANEGRAS



Santini
EMI 567483-2



Abbado
DG 449 752-2GOR2



Abbado
TDK DV-OPSIBO

vengeful command and phrases grandly: only Christoff's pointed way with the text is missing. José Van Dam, soon to be a fine Boccanegra, schemes subtly as Paolo but his timbre is a little handsome for such a dyed-in-the-wool villain. Unfortunately the latest remastering has imparted some hardness to the singers' tone.

The 1983 Hungaroton set is second-division stuff, with little to commend it.

Abbado in Vienna, Solti in Milan

Abbado was still conducting the Strehler production when it travelled to Vienna in 1984 (RCA). Two principals from the previous versions re-appeared. Ricciarelli, although still an affecting Amelia, has become vocally fallible, especially in the higher parts of her register, with adverse effects on her pitch. Raimondi is an even more woolly Fiesco than 11 years earlier. Veriano Luchetti is a stylish Gabriele but not that appealing to the ear. No: the main reason for hearing this set is for Renato Bruson's Doge. He delivers the role with an inward, warm character, if without as much colouring or variety as Gobbi and Cappuccilli, and is at his appreciable best in the work's finale. Unfortunately the recording is poorly engineered and the prompter is too much in evidence.

As it happens, Sir Georg Solti's 1989 La Scala set gives us probably the best recorded sound of all. The performance itself is more variable. Its best elements are found in the lesser roles. Paolo Coni makes a dark-toned and threatening Paolo, and he is partnered in crime by the then-young and promising Carlo Colombara, finest of all Pietros.

Giacomo Aragall has done nothing better than his clear, Italianate Gabriele. He catches well the young aristocrat's headstrong nature and he fines down his voice in duet with his Amelia, Kiri Te Kanawa. For all her beauty of tone and thoughtful phrasing, Te Kanawa doesn't sound very involved in the part, her attempts to sound girlish a shade embarrassing.

Leo Nucci's Boccanegra is an achievement, in terms of involvement with the taxing part, but not one without its costs. He seems to be singing at the limit of his capacities if not beyond them – try the

José Van Dam

The thin pickings of the 1990s include two live recordings – one from Brussels in 1990, the other from Marseilles in 1994, both on minor labels. Common to both is the commanding and eloquent Doge of Van Dam and the dull, provincial-sounding Gabriele of Alberto Cupido. Van Dam catches every aspect of Boccanegra's developing character in his fully formed, expressively delivered singing. He is in marginally better voice on the earlier set under Sylvain Cambreling's direction in

'Claudio Abbado is alert to every facet of this wondrous score, timing every scene to perfection'

'Piangi su voi' section of the Council Chamber scene in this and the Abbado set and you'll hear how much steadier and more expressive Cappuccilli is. Decca should never have accepted Paata Burchuladze's rough, ill-tuned Fiesco. Solti's reading is rhythmically lax and stiff-limbed beside Abbado's, so this studio set never takes flight.

Aragall turns up again as Gabriele, in sadly depleted form, in the Discovery set of 1994. This is distinguished only by Miriam Gauci's tender and resolute Amelia, sung with firm, Italianate tone and line. Eduard Tumanian nicely differentiates between the rough sailor of the Prologue, the authoritative ruler of the Council and the troubled man of Acts 2 and 3, but his voice is gritty, even rough. The rest are ordinary. Alexander Rahbari is an attentive Verdian, but his efforts are vitiated by an average orchestra, and the recording is hollow. So this is no real bargain.

Belgium – Michelangelo Veltri is more routine in France, with a very slack account of the Council Chamber scene.

Neither Fiesco is adequate, and Nancy Gustafson is over-parted as Amelia. Daniele Longhi, Veltri's heroine, is another matter. She is the real thing, a *spinto* who fills her music with rich tone and a wealth of naturally inspired feeling, which makes one excuse a few moments of discomfort for her and for us on high notes.

The Morrison Music Trust issue from the 2000 New Zealand Festival in Wellington needs little comment. It is notable mainly for Marco Guidarini's conducting. Hailing, appropriately, from Genoa, he directs a performance of elemental energy. Of his cast, only Nucci Focile's experienced and Italianate Amelia is really worthy of mention, and even she is slight of voice for the part.



ARCHIVO TEATRO DEL MAGGIO MUSICALE FIORENTINO / GIANLUCA MOGGI

The 1857 version

The 1976 BBC concert performance is reviewed on page 92 so I will not repeat myself except to say that I prepared this survey after hearing that recording, which only confirmed the superiority of the 1887 revision.

Video and DVD

Brian Large directs for video Iijah Moshinsky's admirably straightforward staging for Covent Garden within Michael Yeargan's evocative sets. Solti's conducting is much as it was for Decca, but T Kanawa is in better form, suggesting Amelia's innocent radiance in both her acting and singing. Alexandru Agache moves easily through most aspects of the title-role. Back in 1991, Roberto Scandiuizzi seemed the answer to prayers for Verdian basses, singing Fiesco with long breath and vibrant tone. Michael Sylvester evokes Gabriele's fiery, ardent temperament with his tautly shaped singing. Alan Opie offers a keen portrait of the soured, frustrated man that is Paolo.

The 1995 Metropolitan performance is not in the same class, in a drab staging by Giancarlo Monaco. As Amelia, Gabriele and Fiesco, Te Kanawa, Domingo and Robert Lloyd are fine singing-actors, but none remains in pristine vocal form. By contrast Vladimir Chernov offers a compelling Simone. His eyes tell us throughout of Boccanegra's torments of heart and mind. Levine conducts a strongly limned performance, superbly played.

Altogether surpassing these accounts is the 2002 version from the Florentine Maggio Musicale. Indeed, it is another landmark in the work's performing history to

set alongside the Met's attempts in the 1930s, the 1956 Santini recording and the 1977 DG set. Returning to a score that he knows and loves so well, Abbado gives just as enthralling a traversal of the score as he did at La Scala almost 30 years before. Peter Stein, in a quite different way, equals Strehler's fidelity to the text and acuity in *Personenregie*.

The cast is distinguished by Karita Mattila's unusually positive but wholly convincing Amelia. Carlo Guelfi, in the title part, is no Gobbi, Cappuccilli or Van Dam in terms of charisma, but by thoughtfully building up a rounded portrait of Boccanegra and singing with keen delineation of word and note, he is ultimately most impressive. By his side Lucio Gallo offers an arrestingly sung and acted portrait of extreme nastiness. Julian Konstantinov is a towering Fiesco in voice and mien, though too youthful for the part. Vincenzo La Scola is a conventional Gabriele, but sometimes convention speaks more than over-performing. The chorus and orchestra are splendidly disciplined, the ensemble on all sides palpable, all caught well in sound and picture.

At present, the video version from Glyndebourne in 1998 is not in circulation. Peter Hall's second staging at the Festival was described by Porter, in *Opera* magazine, as 'straight, honest and subtle' and added that he 'trusts the composer'. Mark Elder, a specialist in this score (he was in charge of the recent Royal Opera revival), conducts with flair. The singers are not special apart from Elena Prokina's touchingly acted and sung Amelia and Peter Sidhom's potent Paolo.

Conclusions

The choices are obvious. Abbado's studio recording, now at mid-price, comes first. It should be supplemented by Santini, and perhaps by one of the Met sets, each of which has special qualities. For DVD, the new Abbado set is essential.

My ideal cast would include Gobbi, Cappuccilli or Tibbett as the Doge Boccanegra, Ricciarelli or Mattila as his daughter Amelia, Bergonzi or Carreras as Gabriele, Christoff or Pinza as Fiesco, and Gallo as Paolo, conducted by Mitropoulos or Abbado.

DISCOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

Date	Cast / Conductor	Record company/ review date
1950 ^L	Warren ^S Varnay ^A Tucker ^G Szekely ^F Valdengo ^{Pa} Alvary ^{Pi} Metropolitan Opera Orch / Stiedry	Preiser 90520
1951 ^L	Silveri ^S Stella ^A Bergonzi ^G Petri ^F Monachesi ^{Pa} Giorgetti ^{Pi} RAI (Rome) Orch / Molinari-Pradelli	Cetra CD023
1957	Gobbi ^S de los Angeles ^A Campora ^G Christoff ^F Monachesi ^{Pa} Dan ^{Pi} Rome Opera Orch / Santini	EMI 567483-2
1960 ^L	Guarerra ^S Milanov ^A Bergonzi ^G Tozzi ^F Flagello ^{Pa} Scott ^{Pi} Metropolitan Opera Orch / Mitropoulos	Stradivarius 100323
1971 ^L	Bruson ^S Ricciarelli ^A Lucchetti ^G Raimondi ^F Sfiris ^{Pa} Schiavi ^{Pi} Vienna State Opera Orch / Abbado	RCA 74321 57733-2 (2/99)
1973	Cappuccilli ^S Ricciarelli ^A Domingo ^G Raimondi ^F Mastromei ^{Pa} Mazzieri ^{Pi} RCA Orch / Gavazzeni	RCA RD70729
1976 ^L	Brusantini ^S Ligi ^A Turp ^G Howell ^F Elvin ^{Pa} Hudson ^{Pi} BBC Concert Orch / Matheson	Opera Rara ORCV302 (5/04)
1977	Cappuccilli ^S Freni ^A Carreras ^G Ghiaurov ^F van Dam ^{Pa} Foiani ^{Pi} La Scala Orch, Milan / Abbado	DG 449 752-2G0R2 (10/97)
1983	Miller ^S Kincses ^A Nagy ^G Gregor ^F Gati ^{Pa} Hantos ^{Pi} Hungarian State Opera Orch / Patané	Hungaroton HCD12522/3
1988	Nucci ^S Te Kanawa ^A Aragall ^G Burchuladze ^F Coni ^{Pa} Columbara ^{Pi} La Scala Orch, Milan / Solti	Decca 425 628-2DH2
1990 ^L	van Dam ^S Gustafson ^A Cupido ^G Pittsinger ^F Stone ^{Pa} Krause ^{Pi} Théâtre de la Monnaie Orch, Brussels / Cambreling	Ricercar RIS093070/1
1991 ^L	Agache ^S Te Kanawa ^A Sylvester ^G Scandiuizzi ^F Opie ^{Pa} Beesley ^{Pi} Royal Opera House / Solti (dir Moshinsky)	Decca 071 423-3DH
1994	van Dam ^S Longhi ^A Cupido ^G Schenk ^F Barth ^{Pa} Musio ^{Pi} Marseille Opera Orch / Velti	Lyrinx LYR127/9
1994	Tumagian ^S Gaudi ^A Aragall ^G Mikuláš ^F Sardinero ^{Pa} de Kanel ^{Pi} BRT PO, Brussels / Rahbari	Koch D1CD920225/6 (2/95)
1995 ^L	Chernov ^S Te Kanawa ^A Domingo ^G Lloyd ^F Pola ^{Pa} Tian ^{Pi} Metropolitan Opera Orch / Levine (dir Monaco)	DG 073 031-9GH (12/02)
2000 ^L	Hawkins ^S Focile ^A Clarke ^G Vaneev ^F Windmüller ^{Pa} Snell ^{Pi} New Zealand SO / Guidarini	Morrison Music Trust MMT204546
2002 ^L	Guelfi ^S Mattila ^A La Scola ^G Konstantinov ^F Gallo ^{Pa} Conetti ^{Pi} Maggio Musicale Fiorentino / Abbado (dir Stein)	TDK DV-OPSIBO (3/04)

Key = ^SSimon Boccanegra ^AAmelia ^GGabriele ^FFiesco ^{Pa}Paolo ^{Pi}Pietro

REVIEWS

THE MUSIC LOVER'S GUIDE TO THE BEST DISCS

ORCHESTRAL

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T BANKS

N

Seven

London Philharmonic Orchestra /
Mike Dixon

Naxos © B 557466 (58 minutes: DDD)

A rock musician goes 'classical' – with
pleasing and often effective results



Tony Banks has written several successful film scores, but his main claim to fame lies as keyboard player and composer for the rock group Genesis. Until now he has worked from the piano, and his orchestral music has been scored by others; but for his first major 'classical' composition, he recorded 'detailed demos' of the music and then worked with arranger Simon Hale to recreate the music in orchestral terms.

The result is a seven-movement suite, very much in the style of film music, but with modest concert-hall potential, for Banks has a genuine melodic gift even if his themes are usually short-breathed. The snag is repetition, leading to inflation, especially in the opening and closing numbers.

The first movement, 'Spring Tide' begins with a charming idea on woodwind and piano, but soon introduces a softly voiced and at times sinuous chorale, out of which grows the catchy six-note main motive, which soon lodges naggingly in the listener's consciousness. It is quite imaginatively developed and built to a climax

before subsiding; but we hear it too many times, and this is a problem elsewhere.

'Black Dawn' which follows (influenced by Vaughan Williams) is almost as expansive, opening darkly on lower strings, but lightening as the music rises to a nostalgic conclusion. 'The Gateway' was the earliest piece to be written – as possible film music. 'The Rain' makes a bold contrast, in the composer's words 'more rhythmic and up-tempo'. It has much dynamic variety, but brings occasional coarseness in the scoring, as in the perhaps appropriate, if not really effective, combination of strings and trombones. 'Earthlight' and 'Neap Tide' then make a natural pair, the first a Romantic pastoral with a languishing bassoon theme and simple variations, the second more sustained and evocative – repetitive but rather touching.

The final 'Spirit of Gravity' is most extended of all, opening gently and 'travelling through a number of different musical ideas' (all pithily engaging) 'only to end up finally where it began', making for a curiously abrupt close.

The LPO under Mike Dixon play sympathetically and often ardently, and the woodwind relish Simon Hale's many piquant touches of colour. The recording is good, if not of demonstration standard, but acceptably spacious. I fancy the outer movements have hit-potential, given the extended air-play I'm sure they will receive on Classic FM.

Ivan March

Tony Banks discusses Genesis, Stravinsky and his musical influences in 'My Music' on page 146

BRUCKNER

N

Symphony No 4 in E flat, 'Romantic'
(ed Nowak)

Orchestre de Paris / Christoph Eschenbach
Online © ODE1030-2 (74 minutes: DDD)

Recorded live at the Théâtre Mogador, Paris
in February 2003

Selected comparison:

Munich PO, Celibidache (1/99R) (EMI) 556690-2

Fly to Paris for long-haul Bruckner



Daniel Barenboim used to talk of the challenge of playing Bruckner with the Orchestre de Paris. Nowadays, the Orchestre de Paris probably talks about the challenge of playing Bruckner under its newest chief conductor, Christoph Eschenbach. I cannot remember a slower account of the first movement of the Fourth Symphony than this – not even Celibidache's in his inspired 1987 Munich performance – or one which was more worryingly devoid of any kind of underlying pulse.

Happily, there is a pulse of sorts running through Eschenbach's similarly broadly based reading of the finale. This is a problematic movement which comes off as well as any here, notwithstanding a return in the coda to the pretentiousness and self-indulgence of Eschenbach's reading of the opening movement. The performance, which is live, appears

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*Editorial consultant **Contributing editor

David Vickers is an experienced magazine journalist and has been a regular contributor to *The Guardian* and *www.andante.com*. He specialises in Baroque vocal music, particularly the theatre

works of Handel, and has written booklet notes for various labels. He regularly lectures at the Göttingen Handel Festival, and is co-producer of the website www.GFHandel.org.

to have taken place before a small studio audience. By modern standards, the sound is somewhat constricted. Add to that playing which lacks the kind of finesse one expects from a front-rank ensemble and one can safely conclude that this is a Fourth that neither flows nor glows.

Richard Osborne

CASELLA

MALIPIERO • STRAVINSKY

'Classically Modern, Volume 3'

Casella *Scarlattiana*, Op 44^a Malipiero

Ricercari Stravinsky *Pulcinella* Suite

^aAnthony Spiri *pf* Basel Chamber Orchestra / Christopher Hogwood

Arte Nova © 74321 92765-2

(59 minutes: DDD)

Hogwood's classical education shows in these nicely pointed recordings



The third instalment of Christopher Hogwood's 'modern classicism' project puts some well-known Stravinsky in the context of two less familiar Italian compositions written at much the same time.

The *Pulcinella* Suite is played with great rhythmic buoyancy, the comic *Vivo* and hectic finale done with exemplary panache. But Hogwood doesn't neglect warmth of expression, especially in the Gavotte with Two Variations, which often seems a bit dull in other performances. The recording, made in the concert hall of Lucerne's imposing Cultural and Congress Centre, is rather airless, with pungent wind and brass but a lack of bloom to the string

tone. However, this shouldn't be a serious drawback, especially for collectors drawn to the rarer items in the programme.

Neither Casella nor Malipiero are much heard these days, but the two works presented here have more than enough spirit to merit revival. True, Casella's *Scarlattiana* has retained little of the 'decadence' that was once attributed to it: 'decorous', or even 'bland' would be more appropriate terms, though there is plenty of good-humoured fast music and a few neat contrapuntal turns to liven up its Scarlattian reworkings.

The five linked sections of Malipiero's *Ricercari* for 11 instruments manage more emotional depth, with some nice touches of pastoral melancholy to offset the neo-Stravinskian ebullience. Malipiero doesn't attempt to emulate Stravinsky's harmonic abrasiveness, but the piece is neatly designed and attractively scored. Hogwood and his accomplished team make a strong case for it – all the stronger for avoiding any hint of over-emphasis.

Arnold Whittall

M-A CHARPENTIER

'Sacred Music'

Marche de triomphe, H547/1. Messe pour plusieurs instruments au lieu des orgues, H513. Second air de trompettes, H547/2. Fanfare à Two Trompettes. Offerte, H514.

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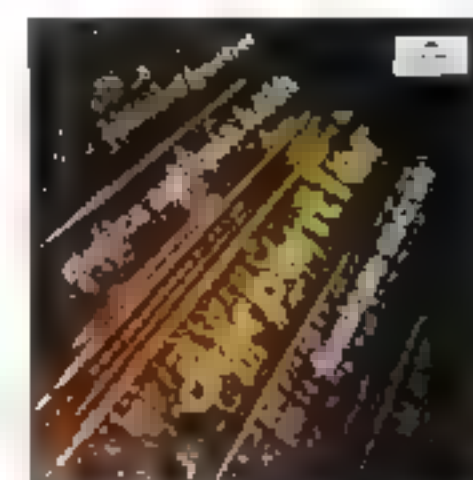
Ouverture pour l'église, H524. Offerte non encore exécutée, H522. Concert, H545. Pour un reposoir, H523. Symphonies pour un reposoir, H515.

Musica Antiqua Köln / Reinhard Goebel

Archiv © 474 507-2AH2 (71 minutes: ADD)

Includes Bonus CD celebrating Musica Antiqua's 15 years of Archiv recordings

A little-known corpus of French instrumental music



Musica Antiqua Köln commemorate the 300th anniversary of Charpentier's death with a recording of his instrumental music dating mainly from the 1670s and '80s and associated with the French

Catholic liturgy. An ensemble of 34 players and eight singers perform this necessarily fragmentary body of Charpentier's music. It is quite a challenge to bring it off outside the liturgical context. The disc is framed by ceremonial pieces that incorporate trumpets. Most works contrast pairs of flutes, oboes and violins with tutti passages; two works – the *Symphonies pour un reposoir* and the distinctly secular *Concert pour quatre parties de violes* (here played by members of the violin family) – are for strings alone. The choir, under Max Ciolek, ably provides the Gregorian interpolations in the *Messe pour plusieurs instruments au lieu des orgues*.

The music itself is, in Goebel's words, 'neither instantly memorable nor always accessible to every listener'. The earlier works are melodically wayward to modern ears, though the harmony is bold and often unexpected; it is astonishing to think of it as contemporary with the early operas of Lully. But Charpentier's later works included here offer glimpses of the superior craftsman he became.

Although the music is well performed in most respects, the heavy, ponderous basses are only fleetingly relieved by passages of *petit chœur*. This is, then, an interesting if ultimately rather academic CD; useful rather than pleasurable, but not particularly enlightening.

Julie Anne Sadie

ASSURED PLAYING MAKES THIS A WELCOME FIRST COUPLING OF TWO ELEGIAC CONCERTOS

Berg Violin Concerto Britten Violin Concerto in D minor, Op 15

Daniel Hope *vn*

BBC Symphony Orchestra / Paul Watkins

Warner Classics © 2564 60291-2

(65 minutes: DDD)

Berg – selected comparisons:

Pertman, BSO, Ozawa (1/96) (DG) 447 445-2GOR

Hirsch, Netherlands RSO, Klas (11/02) (NAXO) 8 554755

Britten – selected comparisons:

Lubotsky, ECO, Britten (10/89R) (DECC) 473 715-2

Hirsch, BBC SSO, Yuasa (8/99) (NAXO) 8 553882

Vengerov, LSO, Rostropovich (7/03) (EMI) 557510-2

Their proximity in time – 1935 and 1939 – and the influence of Berg's music on the young Britten makes the their violin concertos a natural coupling that, surprisingly, has remained untried until now. With Daniel Hope having made his reputation with recital discs for Nimbus, and cellist Paul Watkins at the outset of his conducting career, omens for this collaboration were good and have generally been fulfilled.

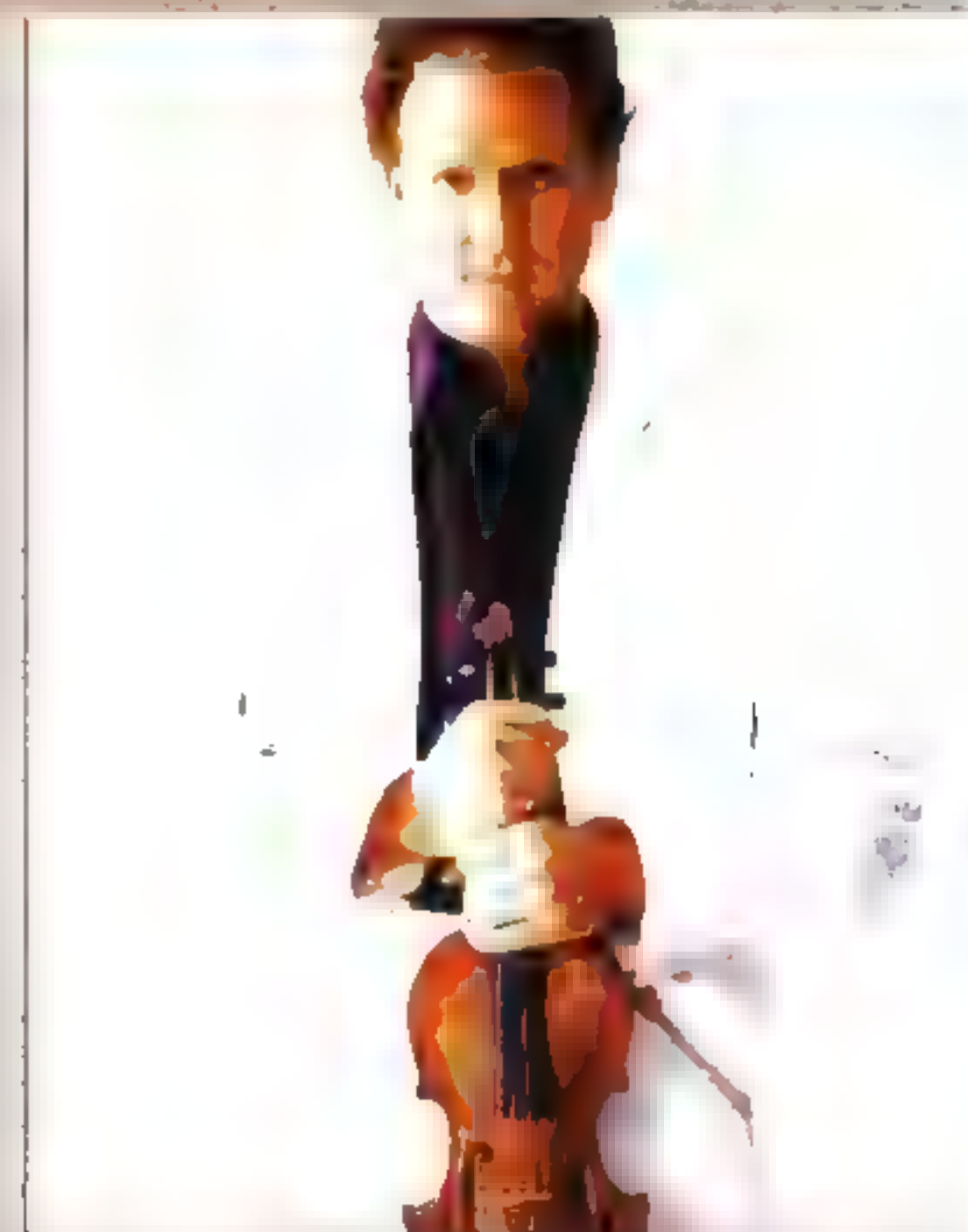
Less so in the Berg, perhaps. The *Andante* of Part 1, sensitively delivered if lacking in cumulative tension, typifies their approach: one in which the *Allegretto*'s pervasive Ländler is rather literally inflected, and the outer sections of Part 2's *Allegro* are forceful without becoming a life-and-death struggle. Yet the accompanied cadenza is finely sustained (2'09") – and, after an eloquent transition, Hope makes



the *Adagio* a fitting formal and expressive culmination. Perhaps the performance would have taken flight had Watkins sacrificed a little of his concern for orchestral shading and balance, and let the music's emotional charge come through. Few recordings convey more of the work's content (though the use, for the first time on disc, of the new critical edition by Douglas Jarman may in part account for this), but numerous others have captured more fully the extent of its existential doubt.

Less intensely 'worked' as music, the Britten encourages a keener overall response. The restiveness of the *Moderato* is well caught – with a touchingly bittersweet transition back to the main theme (4'31") – as are the *scherzo*'s engaging Prokofievisms. Hope dispatches the cadenza with assurance, and if characterisation in the constituent variations of the passacaglia can be a little at the expense of its overall design, progress towards the orchestral climax feels rarely less than inevitable; the elegiac apotheosis itself (11'04") is affectingly resigned. At almost 36 minutes, this is possibly the most expansive reading on disc, but with Hope so much more inside the piece than Maxim Vengerov in his recent recording, and Watkins finding the overall cohesiveness that eludes Mstislav Rostropovich, such a consideration rarely comes to mind.

Comparisons elsewhere are less clearly in the newcomer's favour. Rebecca Hirsch's accounts of both concertos, less cleanly recorded and with



Daniel Hope launches a creative partnership with Paul Watkins to expressive and telling effect

a slightly rougher orchestral response, have a spontaneity and impulsiveness more likely to hold the attention on repeated hearings – while Itzhak Perlman and Mark Lubotsky remain central recommendations for Berg and for Britten respectively. Admirers of Hope will not be disappointed, however, and those attracted by the pairing can proceed with confidence.

Richard Whitehouse

CLIFFE

N

Symphony No 1, Op 1.
Orchestral picture: Cloud and Sunshine
Malmö Opera Orchestra /
Christopher Fifield
Sterling © CDS1055-2 (58 minutes: DDD)

Here's a discovery: a stylish first symphony from a Briton so shamefully ignored



Frederic Cliffe (of whom, I confess, I had never heard until now) was born in Bradford in 1857, a few months before Elgar. He studied composition with Sir Arthur Sullivan and was later on the professorial staff of the newly formed Royal College of Music. He had a comparatively low profile, yet his First Symphony caused a sensation when it was premiered in London in 1889, being described as 'fresh in style; full of glow and spirit, and delightfully melodious throughout'.

It is an astonishing achievement for a fledgling composer and it was my symphonic discovery (late in the year) of 2003. It quite bowled me over by its fluency, confidence and imaginative scoring – the chorale-like writing for horns and deep brass would not disgrace Wagner. Its style is eclectic, of course, but the influences are fully absorbed, and I can best describe it as very like an undiscovered early symphony of Dvořák (and better integrated and constructed than that composer's First).

The strong opening theme with its stabbing, rhythmic duplet gives way to a heart-warming secondary theme, and that same lyrical memorability dominates the slow movement, with its cor anglais tune and a passionate climax which brings material later transformed into the apotheosis of the finale. There is a brief *scherzo* between the first two movements which offers a whiff of Bruckner, but is altogether lighter with its undulating syncopations.

What is so striking throughout is Cliffe's confident sequential development of his ideas – he

is a true symphonist. The finale has a Mendelssohnian flair and grace, producing another endearing secondary theme and moving through an impressive contrapuntal development to its majestic finale. The *Orchestral Picture* is in a similar style and equally assured and inventive, though not as memorable as the symphony.

Why then has this remarkable music disappeared? Christopher Fifield, who directs these powerful performances, suggests in his booklet-notes that Stanford's jealousy prevented its continued exposure when he read in *The Musical Times* that Cliffe's Symphony was 'one of the most remarkable works of its class produced for many years'. Stanford's own *Irish Symphony* was only two years old and as director of the Leeds triennial festival, Stanford was in a position to prevent performances of Cliffe's music, although it was heard in London and Bournemouth. But now this superb Malmö performance will surely put the symphony on the 'gramophone map'; there remains other music, including a Violin Concerto, to be rediscovered.

Meanwhile, if you like unfamiliar late-Romantic symphonies, you cannot do better than this. I enjoyed it greatly, and shall return to it with pleasure. The recording is excellent, full-blooded and convincingly balanced in a concert hall acoustic.

Ivan March

CORELLI

R

12 Concerti Grossi, Op 6
The English Concert / Trevor Pinnock
Archiv Produktion/Gramophone Awards
Collection © 474 907-2GGR2 (130 minutes: DDD)
From 423 626-22AH2 (1/89)

CORELLI

R

12 Concerti Grossi, Op 6
Ensemble 415 / Chiara Banchini,
Jesper Christensen *vnls*
Harmonia Mundi 1+1 © HMX290 1406/7
(147 minutes: DDD)
From HMC90 1406/7 (6/92)

CORELLI

R

12 Concerti Grossi, Op 6
Europa Galante / Fabio Biondi
Naïve Tête à Tête © OP20012
(121 minutes: DDD)
From Opus 111 OPS30-147 and OPS30-155 (9/96)
Pinnock's set stands the test of time in this high-spirited, collaborative music



The re-release of The English Concert's award-winning recording of Corelli's Op 6 concertos offers a welcome opportunity to reflect on some of the changes in taste that have emerged since 1989. Two competing recordings, by groups led by Italians – that of Ensemble 415 and Europa Galante – oblige with two quite different approaches to this most quintessential of Baroque music.

Ensemble 415, under Banchini and Christensen, takes a historically informed approach to the instrumentation and tempi, leaning heavily on the observations of Muffat and the employment

records of Corelli's patrons for evidence. This interpretation is representative, then, of the period in which the concertos were first performed – probably the 1680s – whereas Pinnock's is an 18th-century one, reflective of the time in which they first appeared in print. Where Pinnock relies on a lean and lithe ensemble to convey crystal-clear textures, the violins of Ensemble 415 luxuriate on the cushioned sound created by six cellos, five contrabasses, four archlutes and a chitarrone, in addition to the ubiquitous harpsichord and organ. They also use them as soloists (for example in Concerto Nos 4 and 12) and

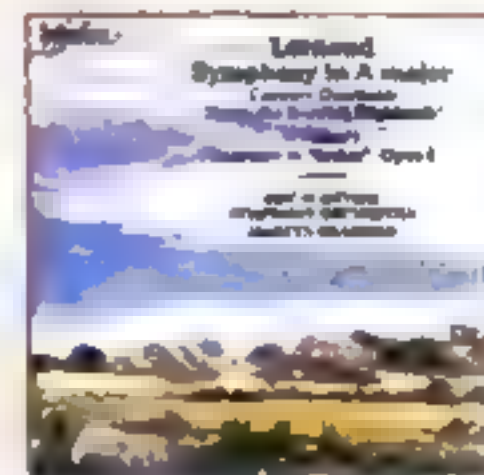
APPEALING RARITIES BY TWO SCOTTISH PIANIST-COMPOSERS WELL WORTH EXPLORING

D'Albert Esther – Overture

Lamond Symphony in A, Op 3. Aus Dem Schottischen Hochlande, Op 4. Eine Liebe im Schottischen Hochlande – Sword Dance
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra /
Martyn Brabbins
Hyperion © CDA67387 (60 minutes: DDD)

These days, Glasgow-born Frederic Lamond (1868-1948) is most likely to be remembered (if at all) as a concert pianist and, in particular, a Beethoven interpreter of no mean repute. Before embarking upon his distinguished solo career, however, Lamond studied in Germany under Liszt and penned a handful of compositions that, on the evidence of this enterprising release, have been gathering dust for too long.

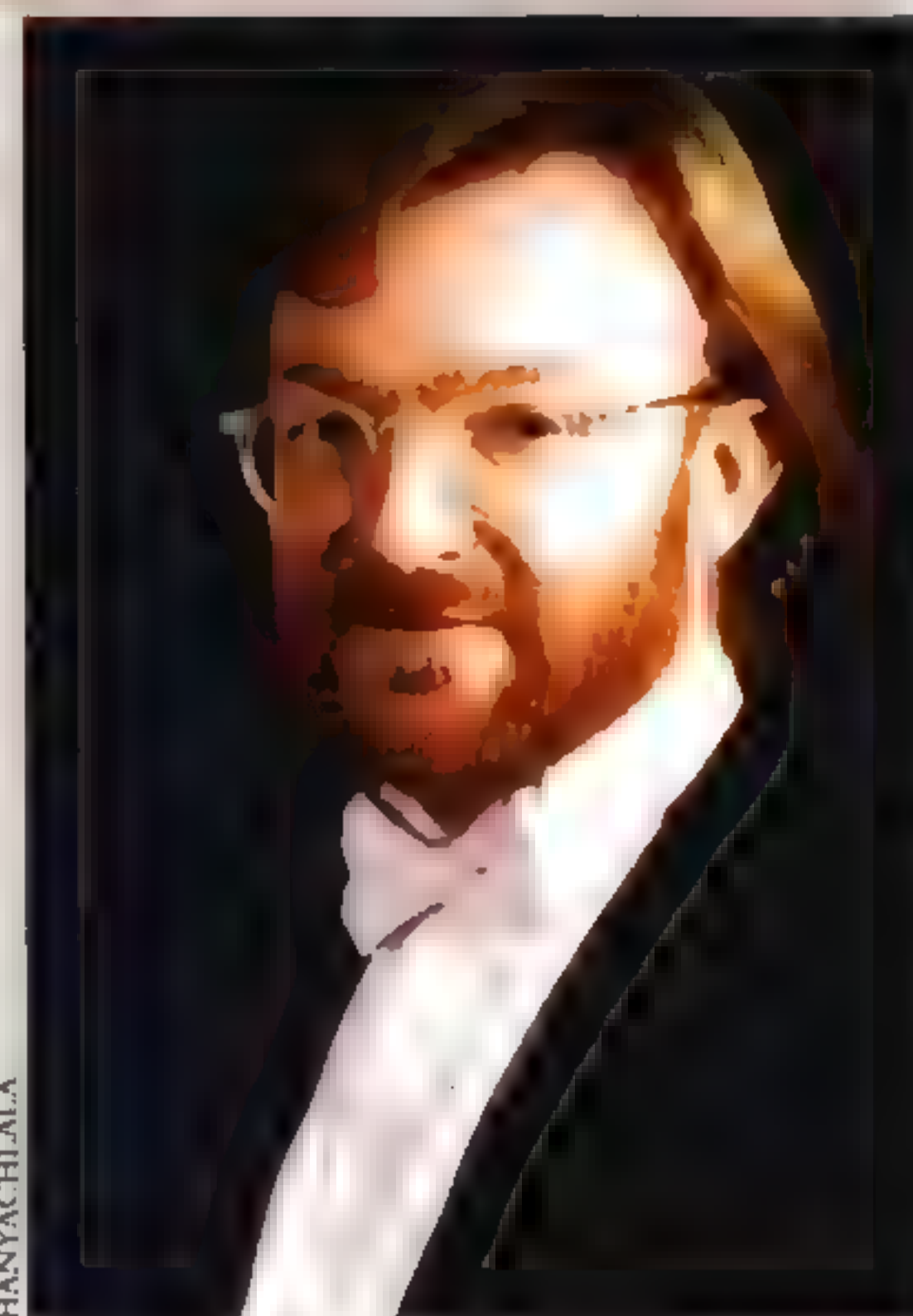
Lamond probably began his lone A major Symphony in 1885, revising it twice before its publication in 1893. Brahms is very much the guiding light here (the finale blatantly cribbs from the equivalent movement in the Second Symphony – it even borrows Brahms's *Allegro con spirito* marking!), yet there's no denying the solid craft and it's possible to



detect more than a hint of a Scottish accent in the gently modal countenance of the second-movement *scherzo* especially. Though no forgotten masterpiece, the symphony is a charming discovery, and it's followed by the no less engaging concert overture *From the Scottish Highlands* (which derives its initial inspiration from Sir Walter Scott's novel *Quentin Durward*) and 'Sword Dance' from Lamond's opera *Eine Liebe im Schottischen Hochlande* (a boisterous orchestral reel and ideal encore material).

The disc opens with the vigorous and accomplished *Esther Overture* from 1888 by Lamond's countryman Eugen d'Albert (1864-1932), another virtuoso pianist and Liszt pupil who made a name for himself in Germany (his output includes some 20 operas, of which *Tiefland* proved the most popular).

Full, bright-toned sound complements these affectionate, spruce performances by the BBC Scottish SO under Martyn Brabbins. John Purser supplies his customarily knowledgeable, enthusiastic annotation. A thoroughly likeable issue, well worth exploring. Andrew Achenbach



Martyn Brabbins delivers 'affectionate, spruce performances' of two unduly neglected Scotsmen

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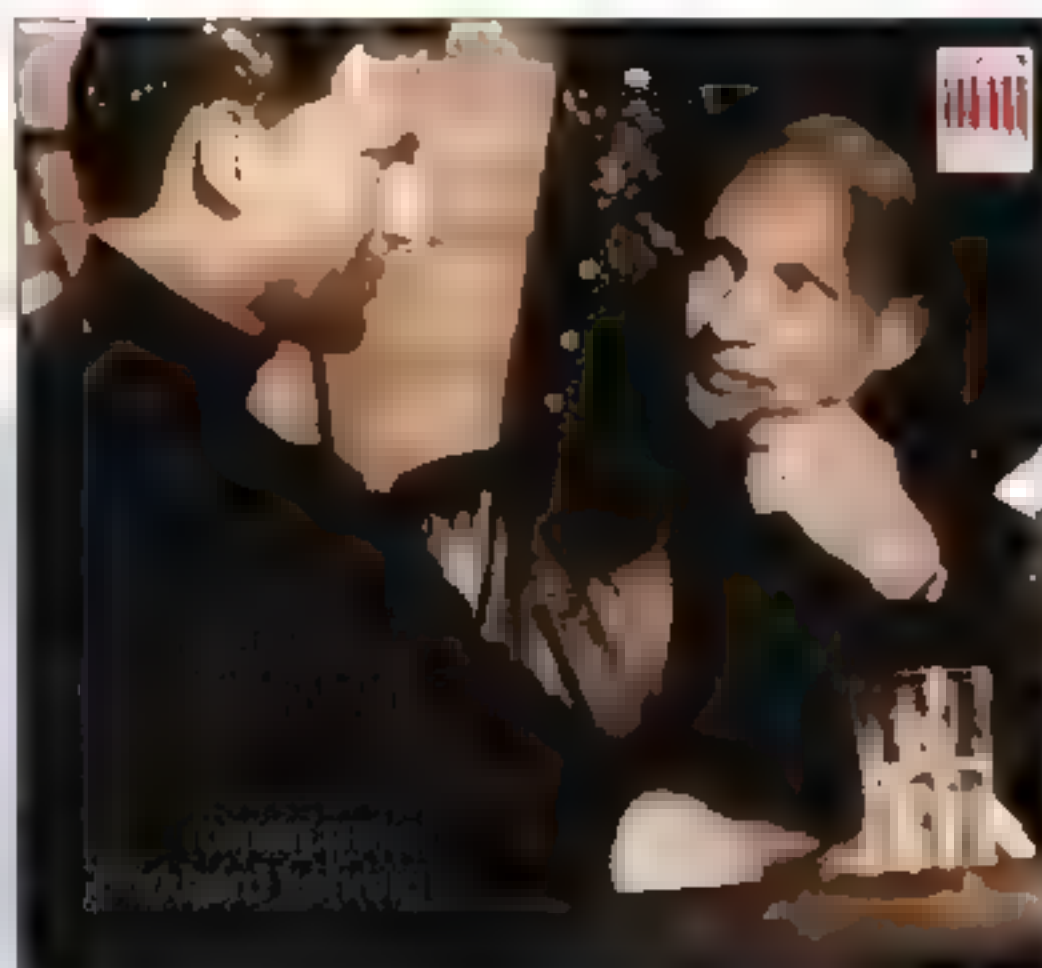


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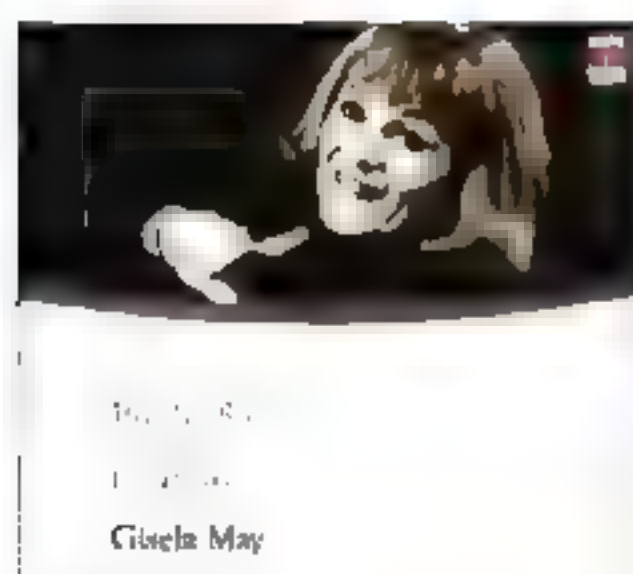
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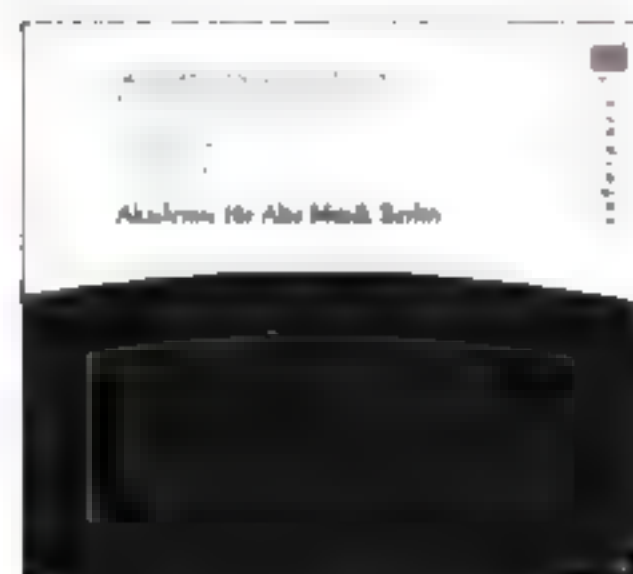


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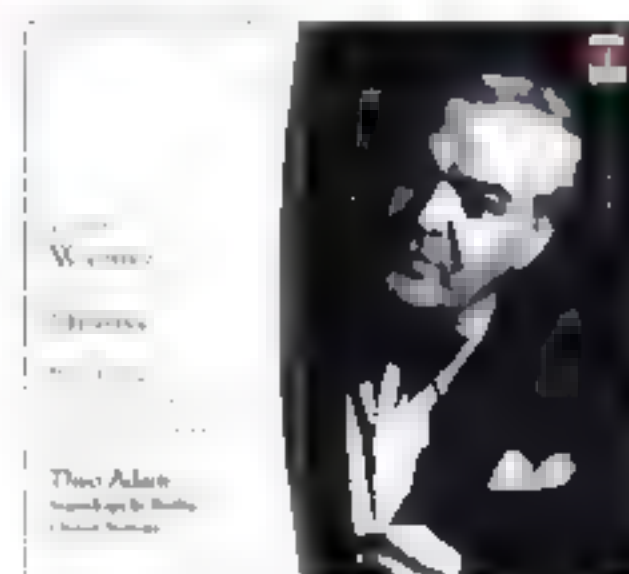


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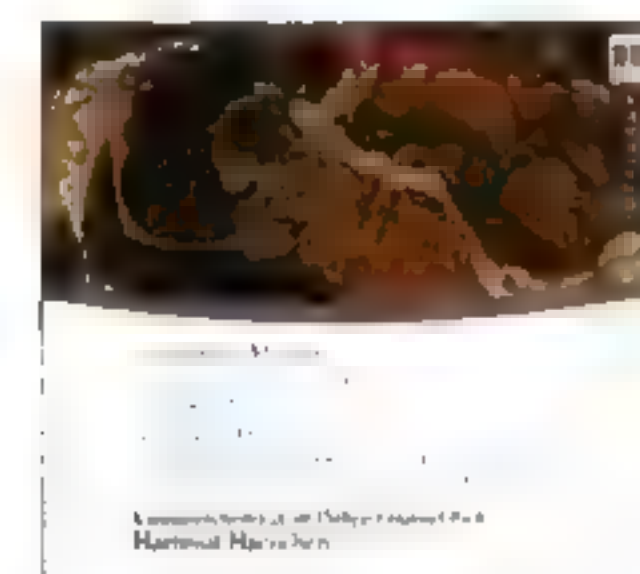


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for special effects, as in the *Pastorale ad libitum* of the *Christmas Concerto* to mimic the sounds of bagpipes and hurdygurdies, to great, if eccentric, effect.

While Banchini and her second violin, Enrico Gatti, offer exquisitely ornamented repeats, they also at times take disconcerting liberties with the tempi within movements (for example, at the cadences in the first *allegro* of the *Christmas Concerto*). Their *allegro* and *vivace* tempi are generally slower than Pinnock's, and often agreeably so. Despite Georg Muffat's report of Corelli's preference for strongly contrasting tempi, I am inclined to believe that Pinnock often takes the fast movements too quickly. What is missing in 415's performances is Pinnock's architectural vision of these works and The English Concert's irrepressible sense of joy.

The leader of Europa Galante, Fabio Biondi, takes a distinctly personal approach to what is in essence collaborative music. His own musical voice is omnipresent. He is the impetus for the *outré* attitude – the eccentric articulation and dynamics and the heavily elaborated ornamentation – that characterises this recording. One could almost be forgiven for thinking these were solo concertos (which begs the question, who was Corelli's concertino second violinist?); to learn the identity of Biondi's 'second' it is necessary to log onto Naïve's website; no booklet accompanies this reissue.

By contrast, the relationship between the concertino and ripieno ensembles Corelli intended is celebrated by the musicians of The English Concert. The collaboration of Simon Standage, the late Micaela Comberti and Jaap ter Linden with their colleagues remains unparalleled in terms of its consistency and precision. While the engineers in these recordings may have influenced these impressions, their hand in the 415 recording is apparently restrained by the decision not to employ special miking; indeed, while the aural impression may be more lifelike, it is also less defined and, therefore, less brilliant.

Fifteen years after it was recorded, the glossy, corporate sheen of Pinnock's interpretation remains undimmed, securing its place as one of the lasting icons of the British early-music revival, if not the wider movement.

Julie Anne Sadie

DIAMOND

R

Symphony No 8. TOM – Suite.
This Sacred Ground^a

^aErich Parce bar. ^aNorthwest Boychoir;
^aSeattle Girls' Choir; Seattle Symphony
^aChorale and Orchestra /
Gerard Schwarz

Naxos © 8 559156 (69 minutes: DDD)
From Delos DE3141 (4/95)

An individual voice among American composers, and exemplary performances



Diamond is wearing well.

Of the three works featured, the best is the Eighth Symphony, two impeccably crafted movements demonstrating a sinewy, almost

Tippettian use of counterpoint, as well as some pungent orchestration. The piece was dedicated to Copland on his 60th birthday, and although it pays lip-service to 12-tone music in its main theme, this is used more for chromatic coloration than in any structural sense. The idiom is typical of the serious-minded generation of mid-20th-century American symphonists. Less abrasive than William Schuman, more rigorous than Roy Harris (whose string-led threnodies unmistakably inspire his own writing), Diamond's voice is individual, with a rangy lyricism all his own. You won't find here the instant melodic appeal associated with bigger names, yet the ideas are personal, the sense of direction sure.

Diamond was still a student when he was approached to compose a ballet from a scenario by ee cummings based on Harriet Beecher Stowe's iconic novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The ballet ran into difficulties, but Diamond extracted a suite of vignettes. It is both tuneful and vivid even if the influence of Stravinsky sits much closer to the surface.

Back to the 1960s for *This Sacred Ground*, a setting for baritone, chorus and orchestra of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Such undertakings have a habit of toppling over into sentimentality or bombast, and it is a measure of Diamond's skill that the piece achieves an appropriately sober dignity, so long as you can forget the greater individuality and heft of Copland's own *Lincoln Portrait*. Sound quality is well up to Delos's high standard, although the baritone soloist is momentarily double-tracked at 7'06".

To sum up: Diamond's music is refreshingly free from gimmickry and razzmatazz. And these are seemingly exemplary performances by the Seattle Symphony Orchestra under their long-standing chief. So why hesitate?

David Gutman

ELGAR

N

Dream children, Op 43. Nursery Suite.
The Wand of Youth – Suite No 1, Op 1a;
Suite No 2, Op 1b

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra /
James Judd

Naxos © 8 557166 (67 minutes: DDD)

Wand of Youth and Nursery Suites – selected comparisons:

Ulster Orch. Thomson (10/84) (CHAN) CHAN8318

LSO, Elgar (2/93) (EMI) 754564-2

Nursery Suite and Dream Children – selected comparison:

LPO, Boult (8/97) (TEST) SBT1106

Characterful, if at times quirky Elgar



Back in September 1990, James Judd recorded an idiomatic account of Elgar's First Symphony with the Hallé Orchestra for Pickwick/IMP Classics (1/92 – nla). This new disc is not quite so convincing, but he remains an Elgar conductor of plentiful personality.

In the two *Wand of Youth* suites Judd directs with spring and plenty of pleasing observation. His antiphonally divided fiddles are a boon, while some judiciously deployed *portamenti* suggest an acquaintance with the composer's own recordings. I suppose one could quibble with the odd decision (the wondrous 'Slumber Scene' strikes me as a touch self-aware), and perhaps there isn't quite the easy familiarity and innocent glow that

Elgar himself, van Beinum, Boult and Handley all bring to this entrancing repertoire.

Judd's *Nursery Suite* is more likely to divide opinion, launching with a unusually fleet (some might say impatient) 'Aubade' and somehow never quite gelling thereafter. Boult's more felicitously paced and intensely warm-hearted 1955 LPO account continues to be the touchstone – and I have a soft spot for Bryden Thomson's leisurely, beautifully poised version with the Ulster Orchestra. In the *Dream Children* diptych, the opening 'Andante' verges on the sticky here (Boult takes nearly a minute-and-a-half less and distils far more in the way of tugging emotion).

'Try before you buy' would be my advice, though potential purchasers can rest assured that the disc offers first-class orchestral playing and (a trace of background hum aside) truthful sound throughout.

Andrew Achenbach

FRANÇAIX

N

Piano Concertino^a. Les malheurs de Sophie.
Les bosquets de Cythère

^aPhilippe Cassard pf

Ulster Orchestra / Thierry Fischer

Hyperion © CDA67384 (58 minutes: DDD)

Splendid playing, but in music that just doesn't hold the attention



The playing here is absolutely first-class: rhythmically taut, clear and bright in texture, with a wide range of dynamics, sparsely but not echoingly recorded. But even these virtues

can't persuade me of the music's value. The much lamented Michael Oliver on one occasion fell to wondering why the pieces by Françaix I objected to were precisely the ones he enjoyed most. I have no answer to that. Try as I may, I find that after about three minutes of pretty well any Françaix work my mind starts drifting.

The facture of his music is faultless: the harmonic sideslips would do credit to Prokofiev, and the orchestration 'sounds' in the same way Chabrier's does – I'm aware that when Poulenc persuaded Françaix to orchestrate his *Babar*, he reckoned he had found 'une très brillante solution'. But, I ask myself, what is it all for? In bulk, the determined perkiness loses its allure. Please not another *glissando*, another 'funny' bassoon, more 'wake-up-at-the-back-there' trumpets. The Piano Concertino is about my limit – or, I would say, his, since none of the four movements lasts longer than three minutes, and the interplay between piano and orchestra is a welcome structural support. I think I just have to confess to a deaf spot on this front, while warmly commending these performances to those listeners who are differently constituted.

Roger Nichols

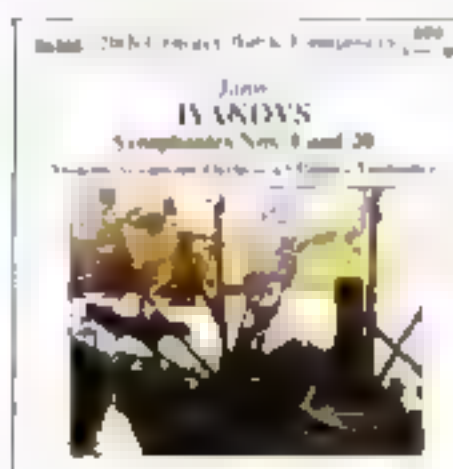
IVANOV

N

Symphonies –
No 8 in B minor; No 20 in E flat
Moscow Symphony Orchestra /
Dmitry Yablonsky

Naxos © 8 555740 (60 minutes: DDD)
Recorded 1997

An engaging insight into the music of Latvia's foremost symphonist



Pēteris Vasks may be Latvia's most well-known composer internationally but Janis Ivanovs (1906-83) is the country's principal symphonist. From 1933 until his death he wrote 21 symphonies (the 21st is incomplete) in a conservative, nationalistic style forged independently of and predating the Soviet annexation of Latvia, however much adapted to political necessities post-1940.

The Eighth Symphony (1956) is a good example of his idiom, albeit a little too expansive for its own good. To the innocent British ear, the opening *Andante* may seem familiar, having a rather Celtic twang to the melodic language. Indeed, it sounds not unlike Bax, albeit leaner harmonically and much less opulently scored. The same holds true of the bracing *scherzo* and autumnal slow movement, although in the *Allegro energico* finale shades of Tübin and Nielsen surface. Ivanovs' style did not change much thereafter and, as with Havergal Brian in Britain, his symphonic production accelerated with time, 13 symphonies appearing in his final 23 years. No 20 (1961) is more personal – although truth to tell his musical voice was never the most distinctive – a darkly dramatic work, with an impressive *Adagio* at its heart. The pastiche Minuet that functions as *scherzo* is a puzzling stylistic dislocation.

This is Yablonsky's third release of Ivanovs' symphonies from the Marco Polo/Naxos house (Campion is also issuing an Ivanovs series). The previous instalments (on Marco Polo) – Symphonies 2 and 3 (2/97), and 5 and 12 – were recorded with the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra. If these Moscow performances lack their national fervour they are nonetheless well played. The sound is a touch recessed but more than adequate. An enjoyable issue; one hopes that Yablonsky will complete the cycle.

Guy Rickards

JANÁČEK

N

Sinfonietta^a. The Cunning Little Vixen – Suite^a. *Taras Bulba*^b. *Jealousy*^b. *Sárka* – Overture^c. *Kát'a Kabanová* – Prelude^d. *Schluck und Jau*^e.

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra / Sir Charles Mackerras

Supraphon © 2 SU3739-2 (92 minutes: DDD)
Recorded live at the Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum, Prague on October ^a17-18 and ^c20, 2002, ^bMay 22, 2003. From ^dSU3291-2 (2/98). ^eSU3485-2, recorded 2000

Sinfonietta – selected comparisons:

Pro Arte Orch, Mackerras (2/04) (TEST) SBT1325

Sinfonietta/Taras Bulba – selected comparison:

VPO, Mackerras (7/96) (DECC) 448 255-2DF2

Mackerras captured live in his beloved Janáček makes a great anniversary set



Issued to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth, this two-disc set of orchestral works may be the last Janáček recording from our greatest advocate of his work, Sir Charles Mackerras. That is what he threatens in the informative interview in the booklet-note, though I hope that at 78 he still has many years of recording activity before him, and that yet more Janáček revelations await us.

Where Mackerras's pioneering Pro Arte recording of the *Sinfonietta* has an earthy quality and Decca's Vienna version is ripe and resonant, the new one is generally lighter and more flexible. The live performance brings dividends in its winning flow and the build-up of excitement, thrillingly caught when the fanfare theme returns to cap the finale.

Mackerras emphasises these comparisons in his commentary, and he is revealing, too, on the interpretative contrasts between Brno and Prague in performing *Taras Bulba*, with Brno adopting far faster speeds in places. Diplomatically, he has followed both traditions, and found they both work very well. For this Prague recording he has followed what the Czech Philharmonic are used to, a mixture of the two. As in the *Sinfonietta*, the results are lighter and more flexible than with the Vienna Phil.

With the Pro Arte Orchestra Mackerras also recorded *Jealousy*, the discarded prelude to *Jenůfa*, and the Prelude to *Kát'a Kabanová*. Both are a degree more urgent in the new versions, with more light and shade. He adds two tiny interludes for *Kát'a* which he discovered in Prague, written when the German Theatre needed more time for scene changes. Rightly, he regards them as little jewels, well worth preserving.

Where most versions of the *Cunning Little Vixen* Suite use Václav Talich's reorchestration for a production at the National Theatre in Prague, Mackerras has gone back to the original. As he says, the orchestral writing may seem unusual, but it is certainly not amateurish, where Talich's version, for all its beauty, 'rather emasculates the acid sounds produced for the insects'. As with Talich, the suite comprises almost all of Act 1 and receives a winning performance.

The rarity is the incidental music for the play by Gerhardt Hauptmann, *Schluck und Jau*, music which Janáček was writing at the time of his death. As Mackerras explains, it is 'a peculiar play whose subject matter bears a great resemblance to Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*'. The first of the two completed movements brings intriguing echoes of the fanfares in the *Sinfonietta* and the second in 5/8 time is equally original in its instrumentation, with deep trombones and stratospheric violins. It makes one sadder than ever that Janáček's life was cut short, just when his creative spark burnt brighter than ever.

The helpful acoustic of the Rudolfinum gives a mellow quality to the refined playing of the Czech Philharmonic, with ample space round the sound, without underplaying the contrasts of wind and strings which are so typical of the composer.

Edward Greenfield

KARLOWICZ

N

Symphony in E minor, 'Rebirth', Op 7.
Serenade in C, Op 2. Bianca da Molena, Op 6
BBC Philharmonic Orchestra /
Gianandrea Noseda

Chandos © CHAN10171 (73 minutes: DDD)

A young talent cut short early that deserves to be heard



This second BBC Philharmonic Karłowicz disc complements the first (10/02) with three earlier works. Not that there are any late, or even mid-period ones, because the 26-year-old who finished his only Symphony in 1903 had barely six more years to live, making him one of the great might-have-beens of Polish music.

Composed in the first two years of the 20th century, Karłowicz's 40-minute *Rebirth* Symphony is very much of its time – not just in its ambitious programmatic span from existential despair to world-saving apotheosis, but in its opulent post-Tchaikovskian idiom. The young composer evidently wanted a taste of the late-Romantic action, much as Elgar, Suk, Zemlinsky, Rachmaninov and a host of other coevals did, but in this instance he clearly over-reached himself, and even in the clutch of symphonic poems that followed he would never quite attain full individuality of voice or overcome a tendency to diffuseness of structure.



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Wagner Parsifal

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Yet this is still a need-to-know piece for anyone interested in the aspirational, not to say delusional, *zeitgeist* so prevalent before the First World War. And setting aside its obvious shortcomings – there is no Straussian potency or Mahlerian doubt to redeem the unselfcritical naivety of the programme – the *Rebirth* Symphony has much to offer in its own melodramatic terms. Most immediately appealing, perhaps, is the slow movement, which depicts the soul sleeping and dreaming of liberation, and which features a tender song-like theme that British listeners may connect with the hymn 'My song is love unknown'. There is also a fine energy to the finale, even if its would-be redemptive chorale owes a conspicuous debt to the slow movement of Beethoven's *Emperor* Concerto.

The symphonic prologue *Bianca da Molena* is extracted from music for a now-forgotten Polish play – 'a tortuous tale of knight-errantry and doomed love', as Alastair Wightman's informative essay reports; not surprisingly it contains many echoes of Wagner. The *Serenade* for String Orchestra is an apprentice piece with a certain charm, notably in the vaguely *Parsifal* slow movement, which helps to compensate for the disappointment of the cursory finale.

The BBC Philharmonic's playing and Chandos's recording uphold their customary high standards, the orchestra's principal conductor Gianandrea Noseda yielding not an inch to his predecessors in turns of energy and insight. I can now rest happy with the knowledge that my old Polskie Nagrania LP of the Symphony has seemingly gone walkabout.

David Fanning

MAHLER

N

Symphony No 2 in C minor, 'Resurrection'

Rae Woodland *sop* Janet Baker *mez*

BBC Chorus and Choral Society; Harrow Choral Society; Goldsmith's Choral Union; London Symphony Orchestra / Leopold Stokowski

BBC Legends/IMG Artists mono © BBCL4136-2 (80 minutes: ADD)

Recorded live at the Royal Albert Hall, London on July 30, 1963

Massive Mahler meets showman Stokowski at the Proms – a legendary night



It's still talked about, this performance. For anybody present at the Albert Hall that night, first impressions must have been potent indeed. Most of that audience would never have heard

Mahler's Second Symphony live. Amazingly (or so it seems now), the symphony had never been performed at a Henry Wood Prom until that night. And with the old wizard himself on the rostrum (his Proms debut, too), it was always going to be an unforgettable first. I wasn't there, but so vivid are the recollections of older friends who were that I've always felt deprived.

Catching up with the performance now via this digital remastering, the force is plainly still with it. The seismic upheaval of cellos and basses on page one give notice of a wild and impetuous spirit at large, and with each successive climax the defiance grows. Never mind that Stokowski takes Mahler's precise annotations with a pinch of salt, never mind that

he rides roughshod over the big gear change ('*pesante*') at the climax of the first movement development to plough headlong into the hammering chord sequence that seems for a moment to signal the bitter end. There's a fierce intensity about it all that transcends even the somewhat grubby sound.

There isn't much dynamic refinement to be found here so it's hard to imagine the extent of the magic in the hall. I longed for a real *pianissimo*: the violins shyly arriving with the second subject in the first movement; the close-harmony trumpets after the start of the 'Urlicht'; the breathless entry of the chorus in the finale – all too loud. That choral entry is a disaster. Stokowski doesn't observe the pause which anticipates it (or else it's a reckless edit) while poor Rae Woodland, the soprano, is crudely miked – so no magic in the moment we first hear her floating free of the chorus. The young Janet Baker sounds glorious, of course, but she hasn't yet acquired the inwardness and wondrous sustaining power she displays for Bernstein in his otherwise overwrought LSO recording.

On the credit side, though, Stokowski delivers a terrific third movement, high on *Wunderhorn* grotesquerie and marked by big, bony textures and keen attacks. As for 'Judgement Day' itself, the Last Trump is etched out in brazen fanfares and despite disappointingly abrupt *crescendi* in the percussion, the undead emerge from their graves to march with increasing urgency to a couple of truly shattering climaxes.

Of course, Stokowski couldn't resist a little score-tampering here and there: an unwritten tam-tam *crescendo* on the final chord, for instance. We would expect no less. But what isn't documented here is that in response to the rapturous reception he asked his adoring audience if they wanted to hear some more, and when they convinced him that they did, promptly repeated the ending. That was Stokowski's failing – showmanship and tastelessness often went hand-in-hand.

Edward Seckerson

MAHLER

N

Symphony No 3

Lilli Paasikivi *mez* Tiffin Boys' Choir; Ladies of the London Philharmonic Choir; Philharmonia Orchestra / Benjamin Zander Telarc © 3CD-80599 (DDD: 176 minutes)

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Selected comparisons:

Proctor, LSO, Horenstein (11/88) (UNIC) UKCD2006/7

Larsson, BPO, Abbado (7/02) (DG) 471 502-2GH2

Von Otter, VPO, Boulez (8/03) (DG) 474 038-2GH2

Zander's return to form in his Mahler cycle brings a powerful performance



Benjamin Zander's cycle of the Mahler symphonies with the Philharmonia Orchestra began promisingly with a powerful and individual account of the Ninth, and continued with freshly considered versions of the Fourth and Fifth. But the Sixth, a Zander speciality, was a real disappointment – rhythmically slack and sloppily played. Happily, both conductor and orchestra are back on top form for the Third.

The conductor's rigorously Classical approach to Mahler has become apparent from previous

instalments. His application of *rubato* is judicious, which means that the musical line is rarely broken by any heavy pushing or pulling. The *Tempo di menuetto* second movement is shaped with tenderness and care, yet the basic pulse remains remarkably steady throughout. In the *Adagio* finale, too, Zander maintains a serenely flowing tempo, changing gears only where directed, which makes the few (though crucial) angst-ridden moments all the more potent. And he wisely avoids inflating the ecstatic final bars, drawing a mighty yet beautifully rounded *fortissimo* from the Philharmonia. There are places, though, where I wished he had been a bit bolder. More grit is needed in the *scherzo*, for instance, which, while characterful, is not nearly as cheeky as Zander suggests in his discussion of the work (included on a bonus disc), and even the normally stiff Boulez wrenches more drama from the first movement's creaks, groans and squeals.

Still, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend Zander's recording over Boulez's, as Zander provides a more comprehensive picture of this sprawling work, particularly in the central movements, where Boulez elicits surprisingly charmless playing from the Vienna Philharmonic. The Philharmonia, on the other hand, positively ooze charm. Special mention must also be made of the doom-laden, stentorian splendour of trombonist Byron Fulcher's solos in the first movement. Alastair Mackie sustains the difficult posthorn part in the *scherzo*'s trio with astonishing purity of tone (on a genuine posthorn, no less), and the recording places the instrument really far in the distance, making one almost strain to hear it – a bold, evocative effect. Lilli Paasikivi is not as dusky-voiced a mezzo as one normally encounters, but I was touched by the sense of perplexed innocence she conveys in the Nietzsche-inspired fourth movement.

Horenstein's profoundly intense account is still my benchmark, but Zander's version deserves serious consideration. The engineering is extremely vivid (despite a few odd balances), and the discussion disc is engaging and insightful – one of the conductor's best. Among recent releases, Abbado's dark-hued Berlin recording is a worthy contender, though Telarc's sound is far superior, and with the set's three discs priced as one, it's a bargain.

Andrew Farach-Colton

RUERA

N

Empúries. Ambients^a. Meditació^b.

^bClaudi Arimany *fl* ^bJordi Masó *pf*

^aTàlia Quartet (Anna Mayné, Eduard Herrero *vns* Taís Costa *va* Enric Riera *vc*)

City of Barcelona Orchestra and Cobla / Antoni Ros Marbà

Còlumnna Musica © 1CM0058

(74 minutes: DDD)

Attractive celebration of a composer who drew on the world of Catalan folk music



As performers, titles and composer's name should indicate, Josep Maria Ruera (1900-88) was Catalan. Born in Barcelona, he spent most of his life in nearby Granollers, and studied with Enric Morera. Originally issued in Spain to celebrate his centenary, this CD presents a varied cross-section of his work.

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Staatskapelle Berlin / Daniel Barenboim
Teldec ⑤ ② 2564 61179-2 (140 minutes: DDD)

Symphonies – No 1 in B flat, Op 38 'Spring'; No 2 in C, Op 61; No 3 in E flat, Op 97 'Rhenish'; No 4 in D minor, Op 120
Tonhalle Orchestra, Zurich / David Zinman
Arte Nova ⑤ ② 82876 57743-2
(123 minutes: DDD)

Symphonies Nos 1 & 4 – selected comparison:
Baltimore SO, Zinman (10/90) (TELA) CD80230
Symphonies Nos 2 & 3 – selected comparison:
Baltimore SO, Zinman (6/91) (TELA) CD80182



Both David Zinman and Daniel Barenboim have recorded Schumann's symphonies before, Barenboim in Chicago in the late 1970s, Zinman in Baltimore in the late 1980s, the latter set recently remarketed by Telarc at mid-price. In both instances the remake involves a radical change of orchestral sonority, warmer and more full-bodied in the case of Barenboim, more grainy, notably lighter in texture in Zinman's case, with the sort of sharpened dynamic profile and fine-tipped attenuation more associated with period instrument orchestras. Anyone familiar with Zinman's equally energised Tonhalle Beethoven cycle will already have the template to hand.

Zinman's second Schumann set also involves some minor textural novelties. Added ornaments and appoggiaturas appear in the *Adagio espressivo* of No 2, for example, and in the first movement of the *Rhenish*. For this latest project Zinman uses period brass and timpani: note the stopped horns for the pivotal four-note motive in the *Spring* Symphony's *Allegro molto vivace*. Tempi are in general swifter than before. The opening of the *Spring*'s *Scherzo*, for example, just about exceeds the prescribed metronome marking, whereas in Baltimore it was marginally slower. More significantly, the third-movement trio in No 4 is now virtually in tempo with the outer sections.

The four symphonic poems collected under the title *Empúries* are lushly romantic pieces full of real Spanish flavour. Three of the movements date originally from the 1930s, the other from the late-1960s, and the whole was revised in 1976, followed by the recording in July 1977 included here. The two chamber works – the string quartet *Ambients*, and *Meditació* for flute and piano – date from the 1920s and were recorded in 1999 and 2000 to complete this survey.

What gives the music its especially distinctive flavour is the references to Catalan folk material. *Ambients* has a movement that evokes the specifically Catalan dance form of the *sardana*, while



David Zinman: 'stands to teach you things about the music that you don't already know'

Barenboim on the other hand remains the unashamed Romantic, excitable, impulsive and on occasion happy to recall the interpretative manners of Bruno Walter or, more especially, his obvious role-model, Wilhelm Furtwängler. Ample evidence is provided by the static transition from *Scherzo* to finale in the Fourth (even broader than in Chicago), and by the breadth of the *Spring* Symphony's opening. While Zinman's tempi are swifter than Barenboim's in the Fourth, the dramatic alternation of slow and fast music in that same *scherzo*-finale transition has a similar impact. Then again Barenboim is no mere clone – thankfully in the case of certain more irksome Furtwängler mannerisms, such as his impulsive acceleration at the start of the second trio in the *Spring* Symphony's *Scherzo* (there was just a hint of it in Chicago). Barenboim's Berlin textures can be both warm and bright (mahogany viola triplets in the *Spring* Symphony's introduction, a regal lead trumpet elsewhere) and always one appreciates his flexibility, keeping the line fluid and malleable. I love his big-hearted-to-hell-with-it-all approach at the start of the *Rhenish*, so different to the lively but more abrupt Zinman. Elsewhere, it's a case of well-upholstered swings and whizzing bare-wood roundabouts, Barenboim opting for a fat, brassy sonority, building a formidable *feierlich* 'cathedral' fourth movement (Zinman holds line and clarity as paramount) and a relatively gentle finale where Zinman is super-swift.

If ultimately I found Barenboim's Third Symphony more involving than Zinman's, I much prefer Zinman's classically moulded approach to the Second. True, at the start of the *Adagio* Barenboim draws more expressive string lines but Zinman's luminous opening is better judged, moving more easily towards

its *Allegro* destination. Also, the *Scherzo*'s *ritardandi* seem more comfortable under Zinman and the *sempre pp* passage at around 4'14", so ethereal and feather-light, conjures genuine magic.

Interesting, given that Zinman seems more concerned with clarifying textures that it's Barenboim who spatially divides his violin sections – vital in the first movement of the *Rhenish* – and that Zinman opts for the 1851 revised Fourth Symphony rather than the 1841 original. Zinman in Zurich provides a sort of Schumann slimming kit, useful for those who find the symphonies turgid and who crave more air between and around the notes. His Baltimore cycle enjoys a softer, more traditional profile, almost like mellow chamber music at times, beautifully recorded and a nice compromise if you don't fancy the rasping 'period' element or added twiddly bits on the new recordings. The more centrally heated Barenboim set perhaps better hints at Schumann's warm emotional climate and vivid sense of orchestral fantasy.

In pitting these very different cycles against each other, I wouldn't wish to side-step the best of the competition, which includes robust Sawallisch in Dresden, imaginative Eschenbach with the North German Radio Symphony Orchestra, loving Bernstein in Vienna, refined Karajan in Berlin, and subtly observant Kubelík in Munich. Kubelík is my personal favourite – Schumann the poet is really given his due – but for the purposes of this review it's Zinman who most stands to teach you things about the music that you didn't already know.

Rob Cowan

two movements of *Empúries* include contributions from the *cobla*, the 11-player ensemble that accompanies the *sardana* in Barcelona and elsewhere in Catalonia. Though this gives the works individuality, it does raise the question of how readily non-Catalan ears can take the strident, nasal sound made by the tibles (soprano shawms) and tenoras (fellow members of the oboe family), which together with flabiol (a kind of flute), fiscorns, trumpet, trombone and double bass make up the *cobla*.

I don't claim this as a CD that absolutely demands to be heard; but there's attractive music, and it's certainly different.

Andrew Lamb

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Delius Appalachia, RTVL/12^a **Dvořák** Legend in G, B122 No 2^b **Handel** Il Pastor Fido: Terpsicore, HWV8c – Sarabande (arr Beecham)^c **Mendelssohn** Songs without words, Op 102 (arr Del Mar)^d – No 2, Adagio in D; No 3, Presto in C **Mozart** Divertimento No 15 in B flat, K287/K271H^e **Rimsky-Korsakov** Symphony No 2, 'Antar', Op 9^f **Rossini** Guillaume Tell – Overture^g **Tchaikovsky** Symphony No 4 in F minor, Op 36^h **Wagner** Das Rheingold – Entrance of the Gods into Valhallaⁱ **Weber** Der Freischütz – Overture^j

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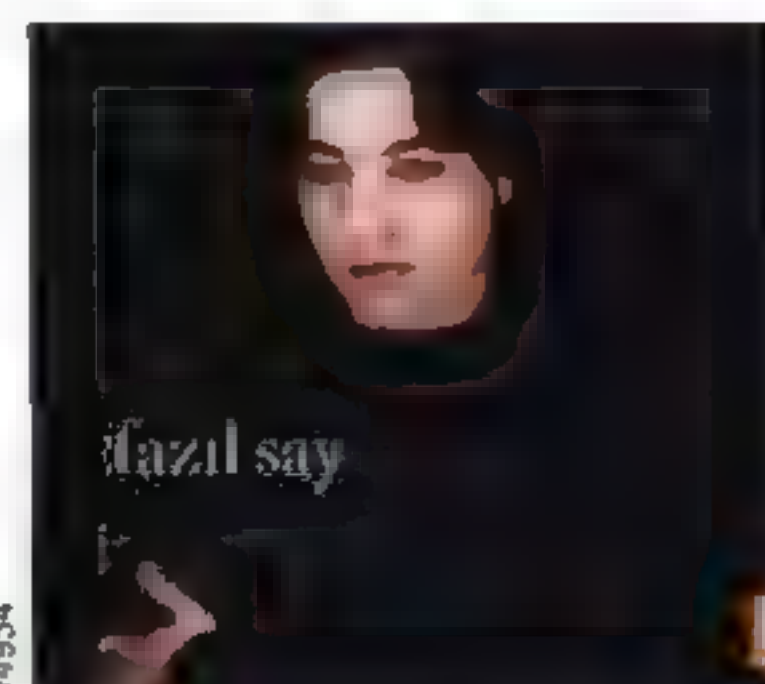


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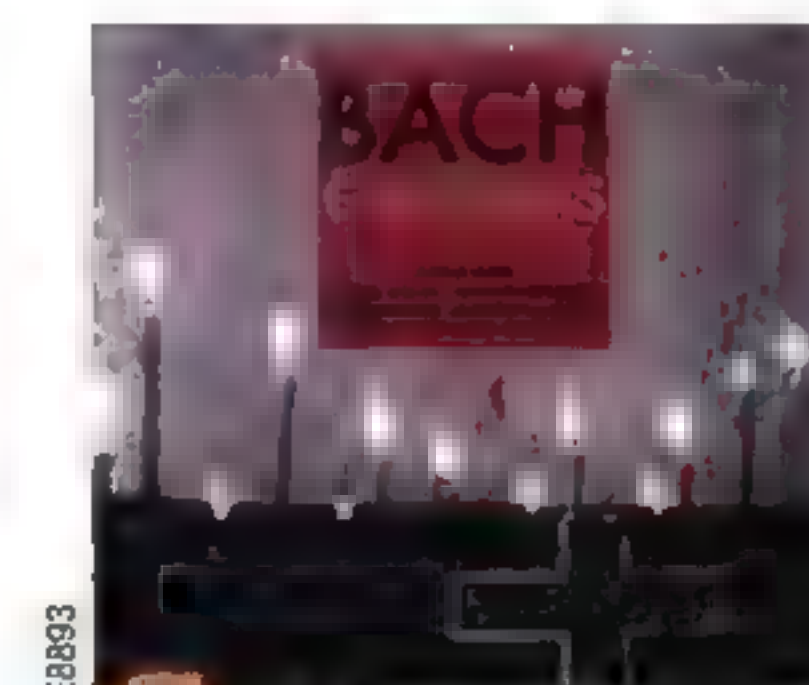


V4974

liapounov

symphony no. 2
orchestre philharmonique de radio france, evgeni svetlanov, recorded in concert 27 november 1998

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^aCuthbert Matthews bar ^aRoyal Opera Amateur Chorus; ^{ab}London Philharmonic Orchestra; ^{cdefhi}Royal Philharmonic Orchestra / Sir Thomas Beecham EMI/IMG Artists mono © 575938-2 (155 minutes: ADD). Recorded at Abbey Road Studios, London on ^eJuly 13, 1934, ^bApril 3, 1935, ^cJuly 12, ⁱOctober 28 and ^dNovember 6, 1947, ^eJune 27, 1949, ^hSalle Wagram, Paris on October 8, 1957 and Kingsway Hall, London on April 16, 1958, recorded live at ^aQueen's Hall, London on November 10, 1935, ^fShepperton Studios on December 27, 1951. Text and translation included. An enjoyable, well-rounded Beecham survey



Sir Thomas Beecham's sensuous, glowing, yet highly ebullient 1951 performance of *Antar* is unsurpassed, and with his thrilling account of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony together provide

the highlights here. Fortunately both recordings offer very good sound, with alluring strings and rich woodwind colouring. Curiously, only the first movement of the Tchaikovsky Fourth was recorded in stereo – in Kingsway Hall in 1958. It sounds spectacular; but the other three movements, made a year earlier in Paris in the resonant Salle Wagram, are vivid, too. Beecham's reading is full of affectionate and individual touches (especially the first movement's delicate second subject and the disarmingly lovely close of the *Andantino*). But he never holds back the onward flow, and the finale – without going over the top – generates plenty of dash and exuberance.

For the opening *William Tell* Overture, the earliest three out of 17(!) 78-rpm side-takes were chosen – for their extra spontaneity; yet the string ensemble in the final gallop is flawless. The playing in the Dvořák *Legend* is not quite as fine, and the horns are not immaculate in *Der Freischütz*. But this is a live performance, recorded in the Queens Hall in 1935 alongside *Appalachia*.

Not surprisingly this displays all Beecham's magic in Delius, with some fine *pianissimo* choral singing, and an exciting finale which triumphs over the two-dimensional sound.

The Wagner excerpt (with text and translation included) is notable mainly for Walter Widdop's memorable Loge, and the excerpts from the Mozart Divertimento are characteristically elegant. Two of Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words*, delightfully orchestrated by Norman Del Mar, make a charming interlude between the symphonies, and Sir Thomas's own arrangement of the lovely Sarabande from Handel's *Amaryllis* Suite is a fitting lollipop. Altogether excellent value, worth getting for *Antar* alone. **Ivan March**

DANCES FROM HUNGARY N

Bartók Dance Suite, Sz77. Hungarian Sketches, Sz97 – Bear Dance; Swineherd's Dance
Dohnányi Symphonic Minutes, Op 36 – Rondo. Ruralia Hungarica, Op 32b – No 2, Presto ma non tanto **Erkel** Hunyadi László – Czardás-Palotás. Bánk bán – Czardás **Kodály** Hány János, Op 15 – Intermezzo **Liszt** Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke (Mephisto Waltz No 1), S110 No 2 **Weiner** Suite on Hungarian Folk Tunes, Op 18 – Presto. Prinz Csonger und die Kobolde, Op 10b – Fairy Dance
Danubia Symphony Orchestra / Domonkos Héja

Teldec © 5046 69351-2 (63 minutes: DDD)

A flavoursome mix of old favourites and attractive rarities played with relish

Nowadays there seems to be a very narrow division between 'young' and 'youth' orchestras, playing standards having rocketed since the war with some remarkable results. The Danubia Youth Symphony was founded just 11 years ago by the then-19-year-old Bartók Conservatory student Domonkos Héja, and they were subsequent winners of the title 'National Youth Orchestra of Hungary'. The DSO have attracted a number of



distinguished guest conductors, not least Zoltan Kocsis, Tamas Vásáry and Sir Neville Marriner, and their showing on this cleverly planned programme suggests just a notch or two below world class.

The most obvious rival is Iván Fischer's older Budapest Festival Orchestra, where an easily discernible character has long bedded in and the style of playing is rather more individual than here. Héja's band is more on a par with Rico Saccani's Budapest Philharmonic; a spirited ensemble, unstintingly enthusiastic, fairly well drilled and keenly responsive to the call of the musical moment. I'd say that of the two conductors, Héja has the edge for refinement and textural clarity, Saccani for interpretative originality.

Rather than present a chronological sequence, Teldec (or maybe Héja) has opted for five 'themed' strands, 'Dances Made in Hungary' (music from Kodály's *Hány János* and from Erkel's operas), 'Miniatures in Dance Form' (Dohnányi, Weiner, Bartók), 'A Programmatic Waltz' (Liszt's *Mephisto*), 'Dances Exhibited' (Dohnányi, Weiner) and the 'The Apotheosis of Folk Dance' (Bartók's *Dance Suite*). Dohnányi is represented by the *Presto* from *Ruralia Hungarica* and a Smetana-like Rondo from his *Symphonic Minutes*, brilliant and busy, a sort of 'Dance of the "serious" Comedians.' Aside from the *Dance Suite*, which Héja conducts with an effective if someone generalised sense of colour, Bartók contributes two lively movements from his *Hungarian Sketches*.

It's a nice listen, if rather 'bitty'. The Kodály and Erkel pieces (a 'Polotache' and a 'Czardás') are done with gusto, and Liszt's Waltz has enough vitality and imagination to make me want to hear Héja and his orchestra tackle some of the bigger tone poems. An all-Weiner CD might be an even better idea. With airy and immediate sound, 'Dances from Hungary' is an effective calling card for an orchestra with bags of potential. They have every reason to be proud. **Rob Cowan**

LIVELY VIRTUOSO PERFORMANCES – COULD THEY BE MORE ZAPPA THAN ZAPPA HIMSELF?

'Greggery Peccary & Other Persuasions' Moggio. What Will Rumi Do? Night School. Revised Music for Low Budget Orchestra. The Beltway Bandits. A Pig With Wings. Put A Motor in Yourself. Peaches En Regalia. Naval Aviation in Art? The Adventures of Greggery Peccary^a (all arr. Askin)
^aOmar Ebrahim, ^aDavid Moss *vocs*
Ensemble Modern / Jonathan Stockhammer
RCA Red Seal © 82876 56061 2 (62 minutes: DDD)



The idea of Frank Zappa's compositions becoming repertory music is a delicious irony, though not entirely an accidental one. On one hand, he regarded most classical ensembles as glorified bar bands covering other people's hits; on the other, he often said he played rock music only because no classical musicians would play his works. For Zappa, seriousness and shock value went hand in hand, and the key to being in his club was knowing how to separate the two.

Ensemble Modern is a cover band extraordinaire. Few ensembles have such a knack for untangling knotty music and remaking

themselves within a given composer's personal idiom. As far as Zappa was concerned, the same juvenile irreverence that tossed off titles like *Don't Eat the Yellow Snow* and *My Guitar Wants to Kill Your Mama* could also dispense subtler musical parodies tweaking Webern and Varèse. Boulez's pioneering Zappa recording with Ensemble Inter-Contemporain, 'The Perfect Stranger', read the jokes but missed the punch line (HMV, 12/84).

With the Ensemble Modern, more than a year of rehearsal went into making their initial recording, 'The Yellow Shark' – so much work, in fact, that die-hard Zappa fans still regard the group as 'Zappa's last band'. Much of those efforts included orchestration, since Zappa often preferred playing his thornier inspirations directly in a synclavier rather than hearing them sullied by human imperfections. But for a band like Ensemble Modern, who had earlier realised Conlon Nancarrow's player-piano rolls, this was a change in technology rather than concept.

Those days with the composer during his lifetime still pay off in this recording, which reunites the Ensemble with longtime Zappa musicians and arrangers Ali N Askin and Todd Yvega to finish Zappa's original plans to adapt *The Adventures of Greggory Peccary* and *Revised Music for Low-Budget Symphony Orchestra*. Once again, the results are truer to the composer's intent than some of Zappa's own recordings. With every new band, Zappa's habit of tinkering with material assured



Frank Zappa: 'seriousness and shock-value'

that it would always stay fresh. Unfortunately, it also ensured that it grew stale just as quickly. Zappa's own performances of instrumental tunes such as *The Beltway Bandits* and *Peaches En Regalia* on his albums 'Jazz from Hell' and 'Hot Rats' are filled with dated sounds and recording techniques that place them firmly in their time.

Both the arrangements and the performances here add a perspective that Zappa himself often missed. It's hard to write for posterity when you're playing for the moment, but this recording assigns those respective duties to fully deserving delegates. **Ken Smith**

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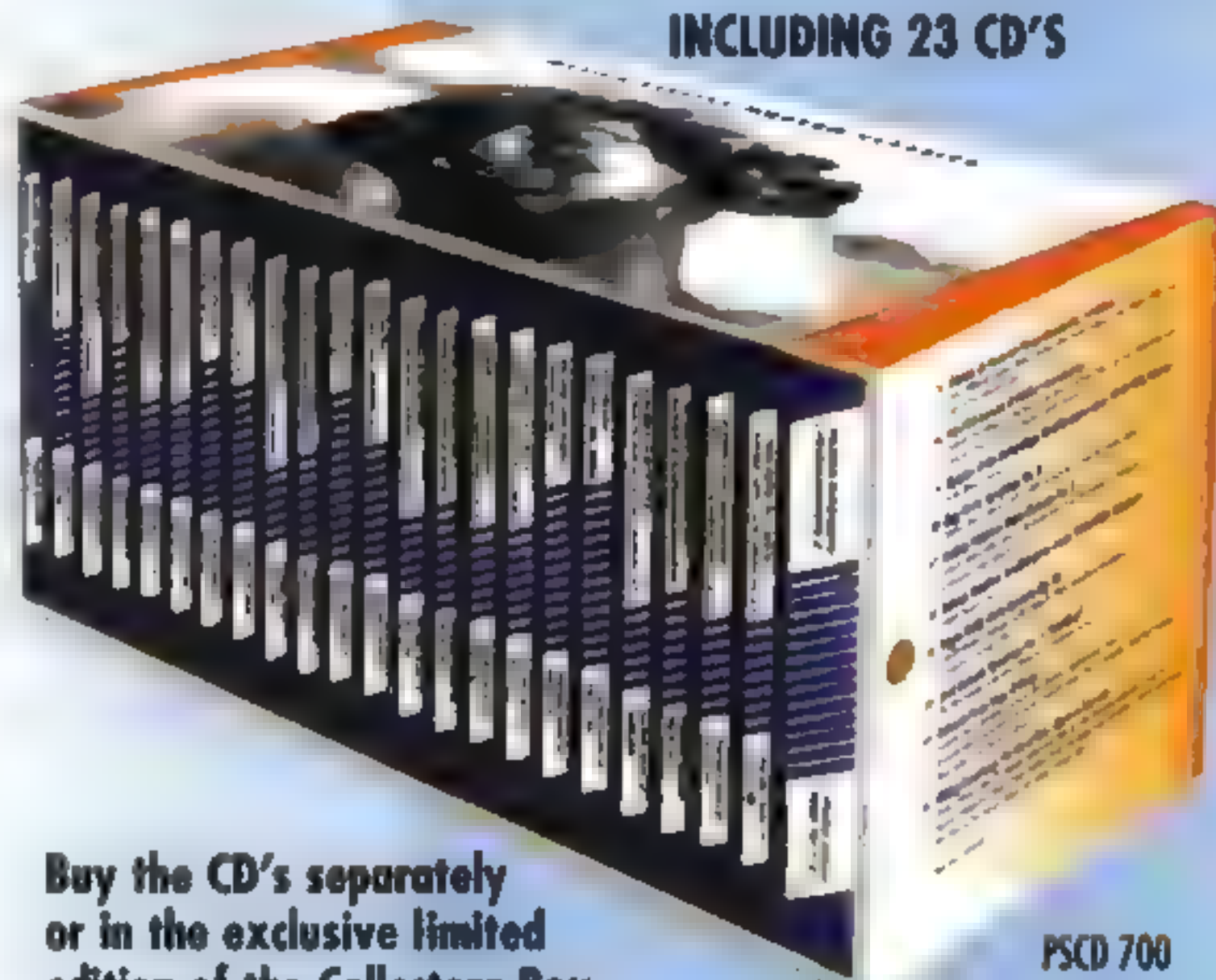
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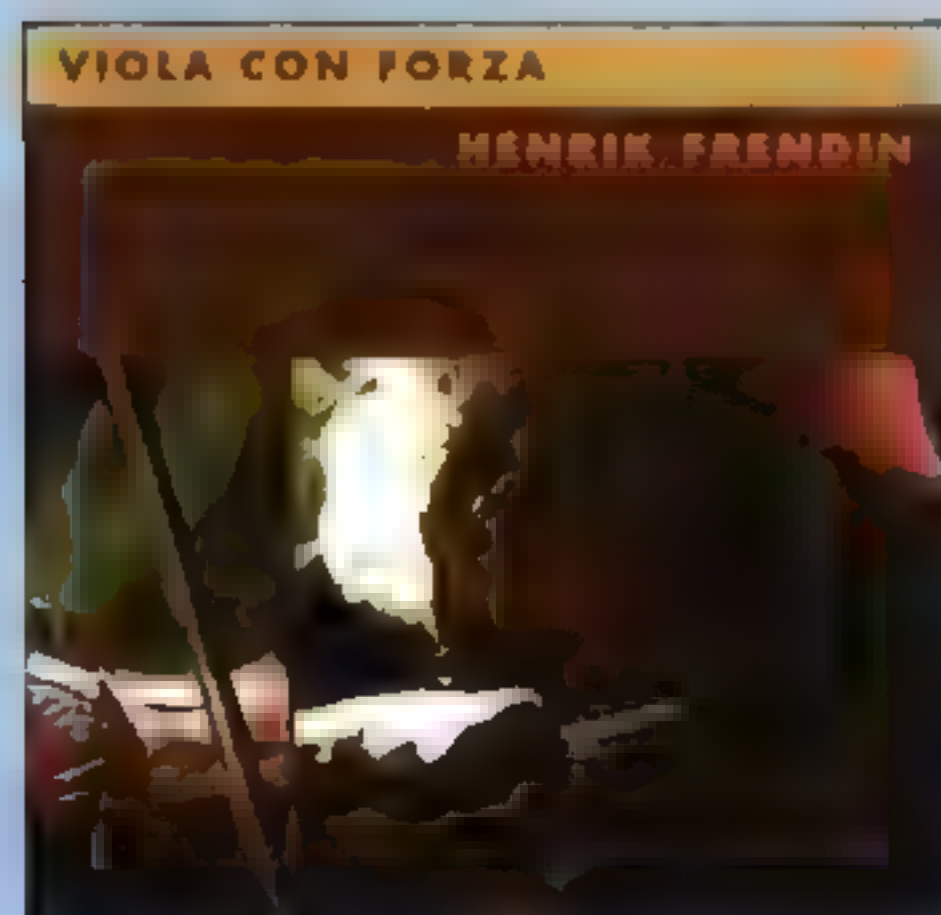
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TURBO TRANSFIGURATION

James Jolly welcomes the return of a Karajan sonic extravaganza

The latest batch of Universal's *Gramophone Awards Collection* – a series that returns *Gramophone* Award-winning discs to circulation at mid-price – contains a two-disc set that made quite an impact on its original release. It is a collection of Dresden concertos by **Heinrich Heinichen** which won the Baroque Non-Vocal Award back in 1993. This is glorious music, uninhibited, beautifully crafted and played by Musica Antiqua Köln with high spirits and evident wonder at its rediscovery. MAK's director Reinhard Goebel contributes a lengthy essay to the booklet which I would recommend reading before starting out on the discs themselves. It paints a detailed picture of musical life in and around the Court of Friedrich Augustus II (also rather confusingly known as King Augustus III of Poland). He was an enlightened patron of the arts and the list of composers who offered or contributed music to his court is astonishing: Albinoni, Vivaldi, Fasch, Hasse and Telemann, not to mention JS Bach. But it was Heinichen who was the Kapellmeister from 1717 (after a training in law and the usual peripatetic study around Europe). As Nicholas Anderson wrote when reviewing this set of 'the Rameau of the North': 'This is not only a welcome and refreshing break from interminable recordings of mainstream Baroque repertory, but also an immensely worthwhile project in its own right'.

It's rather a jump to the next disc, **Richard Strauss's** *Metamorphosen* and *Tod und Verklärung* conducted by Karajan – the Orchestral Award-winner in 1983. *Metamorphosen* closed the first concert I ever heard Karajan conduct live and it was an experience I will never forget. This recording was made at about the same time and if one occasionally regrets Karajan's decision (sanctioned by the composer) to 'turbo-charge' the strings over and above the recommended 23 at climaxes, this is a carefully crafted reading from a conductor who'd lived with the work since the late 1940s. The much-earlier *Tod und Verklärung* shows the opulence of the BPO to great effect.

At the risk of poaching on Rob Cowan's 'Replay' territory, let me herald EMI's new Great Artists of the Century series by drawing attention to a Wilhelm Furtwängler VPO **Richard Strauss** collection that also includes *Tod und Verklärung*. This is a straight reissue of an EMI Références disc first released in 1992. The 1950 *Tod und Verklärung* receives a performance, in Richard Osborne's words, of 'great purity and power, and concentration of spirit', the recording a little hard-pressed at the climaxes but beautifully structured and paced. The *Don Juan* sounds like a young man's performance, full of life, colour and event. It dates from 1954, the year Furtwängler died. The *Till Eulenspiegel* is uproarious, replete with wit and subtlety: this is not humour crudely laid on, but drawn out from

within, surely the mark of true interpretative genius. As before, Smetana's 'Vltava' from *Má vlast* opens proceedings a little incongruously. It is certainly agreeable, if rather Wagnerian in its cut.

Riccardo Chailly managed to squeeze in his project to record all of **Edgard Varèse's** music before such a venture would have been laughed out of A&R meetings. And thank goodness he did, because this 1999 Award-winning set, while rarely 'easy listening', is quite gripping. Chailly sincerely believes Varèse's time will come and this

musical voice perfectly suited to transforming landscapes to music as he did in the Violin Concerto and *Lonely Waters* (both influenced by the Norfolk scenery). The Cello Concerto was written for Peers Coetmore who was to become his wife. Raphael Wallfisch's playing makes the neglect of this glorious piece all the more astonishing.

The second **Moeran** disc has as its main work the Symphony of 1937, a long (perhaps over-long) work that has echoes of Sibelius and Vaughan Williams but which stems from the rich vein of lyricism familiar to fans



Herbert von Karajan's command of orchestral colour and lushness enriches his second DG recording of *Tod und Verklärung* and *Metamorphosen*; Vernon Handley evinces unique sympathy for the music of Bax

set does much to further the composer's cause. The orchestral playing, divided between the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and the ASKO Ensemble, is impeccable: there is a real sense that these musicians believe in the music. Chailly's analytical approach – which some find a little cool in Romantic literature – is absolutely ideal here. It's well worth exploring this music when it's done so superbly.

I enjoyed an Apex reissue of **Tchaikovsky's** First Symphony (*Winter Dreams*) coupled with *Francesca da Rimini* played by the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra under Kurt Masur. This is a reading of the Symphony that aligns itself with the great Austro-German symphonic tradition: it's all very 'straight' and without frills, nor is there much Slav flavour. But it has an appealing freshness and honesty which, combined with some fine playing by the Leipzig orchestra (if a little muddily recorded in the lowest reaches), makes it worth a detour. I like more passion to my *Francescas*: the tameness of this one is hard to square with the original Dante.

Next, two wonderful discs of music by **EJ Moeran** from Vernon Handley and the Ulster Orchestra. The first couples the Violin and Cello Concertos with two shorter orchestral works, *Lonely Waters* and *Whythorne's Shadow*. A close friend of Peter Warlock (aka Philip Heseltine) Moeran had a

of the British symphonic tradition (think Bax). Handley gives it a splendid performance. The *Rhapsody* for piano and orchestra (Margaret Fingerhut in commanding form as the soloist) dates from 1943 and it was first heard at a Prom in the Royal Albert Hall. I bet it went down a storm, mid-war, because of its rhapsodic flavour and exuberant close. The delightful *Overture for a Masque* fills up the rest of the disc: it is a toe-tapper of palpable joy. ●

THE RECORDINGS

Heinichen Musica Antiqua Köln / Goebel
Archiv Ⓢ 474 892-2GGR2 (137 minutes: DDD)

R Strauss BPO / Karajan
DG Ⓢ 474 889-2GGR (51 minutes: DDD)

R Strauss, Smetana VPO / Furtwängler
EMI GAO mono Ⓢ 562790-2 (73 minutes: ADD)

Varèse RCOA / Chailly
Decca Ⓢ 475 487-DGR2 (150 minutes: DDD)

Tchaikovsky Leipzig Gewandhaus / Masur
Apex Ⓢ 2564 61141-2 (69 minutes: DDD)

Moeran Ulster Orchestra / Handley
Chandos Classics Ⓢ CHAN10168X
(78 minutes: DDD)

Moeran Ulster Orchestra / Handley
Chandos Classics Ⓢ CHAN10169X
(74 minutes: DDD)

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CELEBRATION IN METAL

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood sounds the trumpet for brass players everywhere

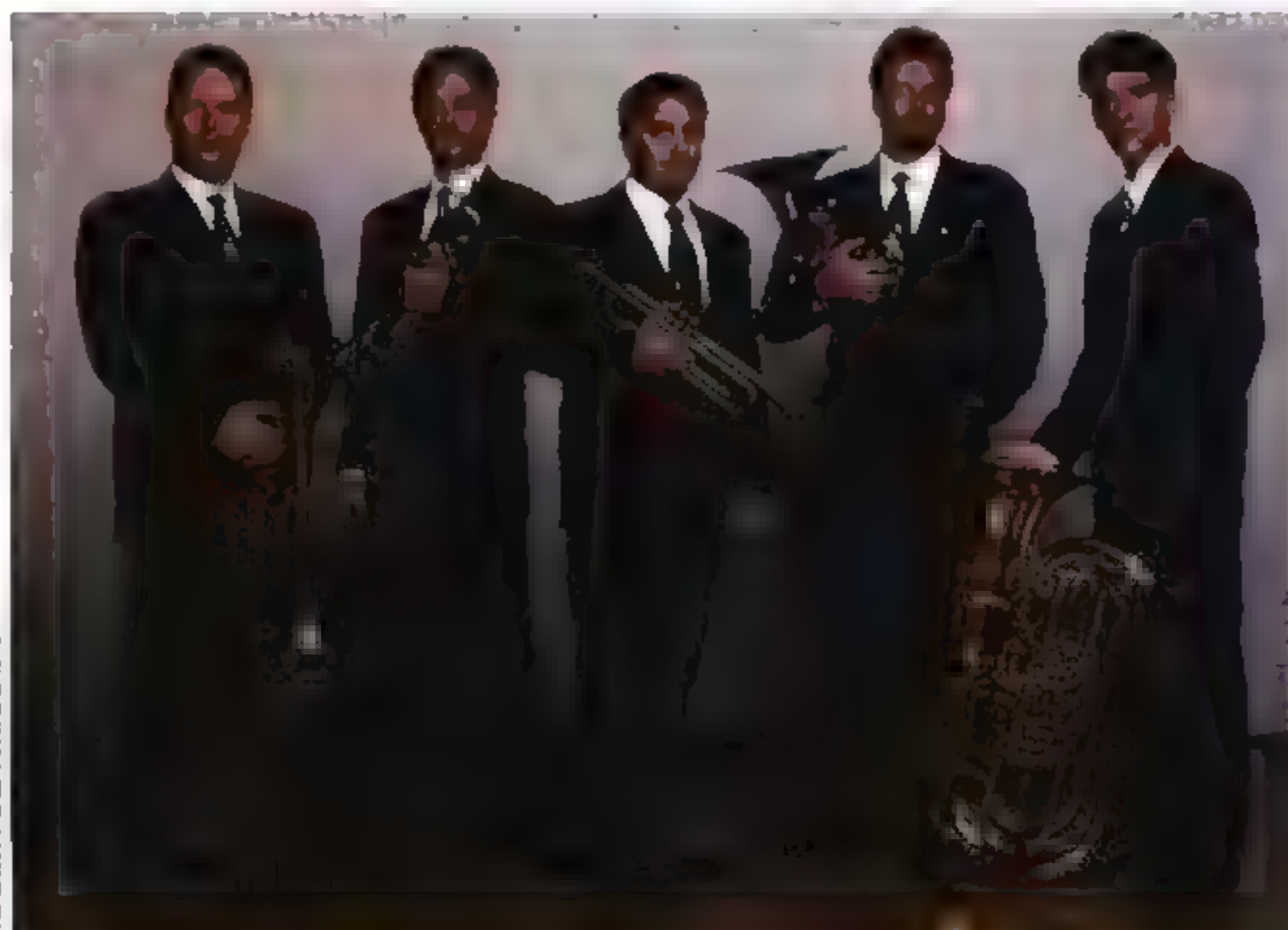
In the simplest terms, one could say that modern classical brass music falls within three broad categories: original works before 1900 (which are rare or else 'on the early side'), original music of the 20th century (plentiful and varied), and arrangements of music written for other instruments (plentiful and variable). This batch of recent releases covers the territory with a revealing cross-section of archival and cutting-edge brass playing.

In the third volume of **Brass Archives** comes a quintet of cornet virtuosos from 1926-32 including Harry Mortimer, Herbert L Clarke and Del Staigers. This is an exhibition of raw Heifetz-like virtuosity and élan beyond merely flying fingers. There is poetry behind the warbling *legato* of these 'showcase' themes and variations, polkas and ballads, and a simple celebration of playing a tune very beautifully, as Jack Mackintosh does in Haydn Wood's delectable *Bird of Love Divine*. The striking rhythmic incision in many famous bands (Fodens Motor Works Band of 1931 were quite an outfit) was rarely boasted by orchestras of the time.

If the rich cornet-virtuoso tradition produced its own special approach to repertoire, there were also musicians emerging to lure the instrument out of the bandstands and clubs into more respectable circles. The Quintet and Sextet by Victor Ewald and Oskar Böhme respectively bring the world of the mainstream 19th-century into the brass fraternity around 1900. In **Romantic music for brass**, the Center City Brass Quintet is an exquisitely blended, focused ensemble who render these works with much aplomb and facility. To cap it, they begin with Verne Reynolds' skilful arrangement of Mendelssohn's youthful Op 12 Quartet. In surround-sound, this is an immaculate feast of soaring music in a refreshing and unlikely idiom.

The Sextet in E flat minor by Böhme (trumpeter, incidentally, in the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra for 24 years) features again in **Nokturno**, a cleverly conceived disc of early Russian brass chamber music (with the exception of Denisov's Six Pieces from 1993). brass partout are a young German group offering studied readings of the Romantic repertoire but without the warmth and captivating characterisation of CCBQ. Glazunov's gem, *In Modo Religioso*, is, however, beautifully vocalised. Overall, a disc of interest as a document of rare species rather than charismatic brass playing.

Opera was a field of rich pickings for brass bands of a century and more ago. One thinks, for instance, of mid-Victorian opera arrangements for the pioneering Cyfartha Band in Wales. Germany's HR-Brass present a modern equivalent with a disc of, in their own words, 'opera potpourri'. **Viva Verdi!** is decidedly irreverent, avoiding the trap of gratuitous pyrotechnics from frustrated brass players bored by their own limited repertoire: real invention infuses these zany overture-medley-paraphrases, the highlights of which are the centrepiece *The Magic Trumpet* – yes, a piccolo trumpet is the Queen of Night and very telling, too, but then



Center City Brass Quintet: 'an exquisitely blended, focused ensemble' in 19th-century rarities

ROGER MASTROLIANI

comes the Hummel Concerto as a link and Bach Second *Brandenburg*, und so weiter. For repeated listening I'd hesitate to recommend it, but it strikes a chord for scintillating badinage.

The ensemble that promoted British brass as an internationally renowned product was the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble. Decca's **British Music for Brass**, recorded 1970-80, reminds us of the inimitable gait of the group, brave and bold and yet never shunning individual coloration – as clearly perceivable in Britten fanfare as in Elgar or Arnold's Symphony for Brass. There are many legendary PJBE recordings in Decca's catalogue which are required listening: none more so than the witty if, by today's standards, slightly rough-edged Arnold Quintet.

With the quintet medium becoming the staple brass chamber group for composers in the last 30 or 40 years, only the very best creators manage to mould a language which realises the potential of such disparate timbres: two trumpets, horn, trombone and tuba combine with gleaming nobility and intense poignancy in quintets by Vagn Holmboe and others, played by the Art of Brass Copenhagen. Enterprising and tonally rounded, this group perform an all-Danish programme (called **From the Merry Life of a Spy** after Ib Nørholm's contribution) with serious purpose and special sensitivity to dynamic. The recorded sound is disappointingly hollow for such a committed group.

American Visions is American Brass Quintet's equivalent missionary tract to promote the brass quintet as a serious medium. This group has over 40 years of experience and it shows in concentrated performances intensified by outstanding recorded sound (for which the ABQ's productions were renowned with Delos). Much of the music is derivative, prolix and forgettable but Andrew Thomas's commentary, *Consonanze Stravaganti*, based on keyboard works by the 16th-century Gesualdo 'groupie', Giovanni Macque, is as astutely manufactured as William Schuman's *American Hymn* (1980) is stirring.

Amongst current established quintets, Empire Brass remain a force to be reckoned with, despite regular changes in personnel over the years. Founder-member, trumpeter Rolf Smedvig, is the key player – in every sense – shaping the group and arranging the music for this disc of **Baroque music for brass and organ**. The key attribute is slickness, in both ensemble and timbral homogeneity. This is all very well but they're not quite the group they were. The arrangements of sonatas by Handel and Albinoni are flaccid and one wonders quite what the role of the organ is beyond textural fortification. Going through the motions, they don't even bother to get the composers right on the cover: Purcell and Clarke, both claimed as Clarke and the pieces are listed the wrong way round. A whiff of arrogance perhaps? 🗨

THE RECORDINGS

Brass Archives III Various artists
Choice Recordings © CD3 BM3 (77 minutes: ADD)

Romantic Music for Brass
Center City Brass Quintet
Chandos © CHAN10140; 📀 CHSA5023
(56 minutes: DDD)

Nokturno brass partout
BIS © BIS-CD1274 (56 minutes: DDD)

Viva Verdi! H-R Brass
MDG Scene © MDG603 1187-2 (61 minutes: DDD)

British Music for Brass
Philip Jones Brass Ensemble
Decca © 473 714-2 (71 minutes: ADD)

From The Merry Life of a Spy
Art of Brass Copenhagen
Dacapo © 8 226001 (72 minutes: DDD)

American Visions American Brass Quintet
Summit Records © DCD365 (68 minutes: DDD)

Baroque Music for Brass and Organ
Empire Brass Quintet; Kuhlman
Telarc © CD80614 (55 minutes: DDD)

CHAMBER

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BRAHMS

N

Berg Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano, Op 5^{ad}. Piano Sonata, Op 1^d **Brahms** Cello Sonatas^{cd} – No 1 in E minor, Op 38; No 2 in F, Op 99. Clarinet Sonatas, Op 120^{ad} – No 1 in F minor; No 2 in E flat. Scherzo, 'FAE Sonata', WoO2^{bd}. Violin Sonatas^{bd} – No 1 in G, Op 78; No 2 in A, Op 100; No 3 in D minor, Op 108. *Vergebliches Ständchen*, Op 84 No 4^{ad}. *Wie Melodien zieht es mir*, Op 105 No 1^{cd} **Schumann** Drei Fantasiestücke, Op 73^{cd}. Drei Romanzen, Op 94^{cd}

^aSabine Meyer *cl* ^bChristian Tetzlaff *vn*

^cBoris Pergamenschikow *vc* ^dLars Vogt *pf*

EMI © 557523-2 (3 hours 32 minutes: DDD)

Recorded live during the Heimbach Chamber Music Festival, 'Spannungen' at the Hydro-electric power station, Heimbach in September 2002

BRAHMS

N

Three Pieces, Op 117. Six Pieces, Op 118. Four Pieces, Op 119

Lars Vogt *pf*

EMI © 557543-2 (59 minutes: DDD)

Cello Sonatas – selected comparison:

Du Pré, Barenboim (3/01R) (EMI) 562741-2

Clarinet Sonatas – selected comparison:

King, Brinson (10/87R) (HYPER) CDH55158

Violin Sonatas – selected comparisons:

Pertman, Ashkenazy (11/85R) (EMI) 566893-2

Suk, Kutchik (1/68R) (DECCA) 421 092-2DM

Op 117, 118 and 119 – selected comparison:

Kovacevich (4/83R) (PHIL) 442 589-2PM2

Other versions may lead the field, but live music-making here brings its own rewards



Meyer and Christian Tetzlaff.

Vogt is even more dominant over cellist Boris Pergamenschikow, partly because of a slightly backward balance for the cello (some would say a natural balance) and partly because he tends to set a fast pace and leaves it to the soloist to keep up, as in the finale of the First Cello Sonata or the *Allegro appassionato* third movement of Op 99. The ensemble is not ideally crisp, but the imprecisions are no more worrying than in a fair proportion of live recordings: the 'live' quality is what matters.

Even so, despite many subtleties in Pergamenschikow's playing, I still prefer the warmth and

resonance of Jacqueline du Pré and Daniel Barenboim (now reissued in EMI's Great Recordings of the Century series). Pergamenschikow and Vogt relax more in the two sets of Schumann pieces (Op 94, quite a rarity played on the cello), as well as the Brahms song transcription.

Sabine Meyer uses *Vergebliches Ständchen* as an encore but the pay-off there, with the maiden peremptorily shutting the window in her lover's face, is inevitably less effective when played on the clarinet rather than sung. In the two sonatas Vogt and Meyer are well-matched for expressiveness and flexible *rubato*. Thea King and Clifford Benson (also just reissued, on Hyperion) are steadier and less personal but equally committed. The extra freedom of the Meyer/Vogt readings is very much part of the live performance, with Meyer producing her glorious peaches-and-cream tone, where King offers a sharper contrast between the bright toned opening of Op 120 No 1 and the mellowness of the second subject.

The Second Sonata comes first on the EMI disc; the Berg works which succeed it inspire magnetically intense performances from both musicians: Vogt rightly treats the Op 1 Sonata as a post-Romantic piece.

In many ways Vogt's most satisfying partnership is with Tetzlaff: the *Scherzo* which Brahms contributed to the composite *FAE* Sonata with Schumann and Dietrich receives an exceptionally powerful performance with emphatic cross-rhythms. In the numbered sonatas their incisiveness, urgency and lightness of touch makes them formidable rivals to the two classic versions listed. The opening of Op 100 may seem almost casual but full intensity is quickly established, and the opening of the D minor, Op 108, has a hushed, nervy quality; this is a highly individual reading. The discs come in separate jewel-cases, which suggests they might become available separately – particularly welcome with Tetzlaff's disc.

Vogt's disc of the late piano works is a conventional studio recording. Whether for that reason or not, Vogt's speeds tend to be very much on the broad side, especially compared with Stephen Kovacevich's always-refreshing performances on Philips. Even so, Vogt's warmth and his ability to convey a sense of spontaneous invention make these a welcome supplement to the Festival performances. They are very well recorded.

Edward Greenfield

DELIUS • ELGAR • WALTON

G

Delius Violin Sonata No 2^a

Elgar Violin Sonata in E minor, Op 82^b

Walton Violin Sonata^c

Max Rostal *vn* Colin Horsley *pf*

Testament mono © SBT1319 (69 minutes: DDD)

From Argo ^aRG47 (6/55), ^bTM49 (6/57),

^cRG48 (6/55)

An inspired interpreter of British music lives again on this valuable historic reissue



Fleeing from the Nazis in Berlin in 1934, the violinist Max Rostal came to London. He became not only a key figure in British music-making, but an inspired interpreter of its music. Any idea that only a British-born musician can give idiomatic readings of British music, whether of Elgar, Delius or Walton, is dismissed by these recordings of violin sonatas.

The recordings, made at the Hollymount Studio in Hampstead in 1954, are unhelpfully dry by latterday standards, with little or no bloom on the violin, placed rather too close. It says much for Rostal's artistry, perfectly matched by his regular piano partner Colin Horsley, that after the initial shock of the forward sound – particularly obtrusive at the start of the Delius, the first item on the disc – one quickly forgets the limitations of sound, and concentrates on Rostal's natural understanding of and flexible approach to some elusive works.

The Walton sonata was still only five years old when Rostal and Horsley made this recording. Its original interpreters, Menuhin and Louis Kentner, had already recorded it for EMI, but Rostal and Horsley are even more persuasive. Rostal shades his tone with great subtlety in the haunting recollection of the main theme in the coda of the first movement (track 4, 10'19"). Generally opting for faster speeds than Menuhin, Rostal then holds the argument together more tautly in the long set of variations that make up the second movement, playing with rapt concentration, not least in his persuasive reading of the seventh and last variation, *Andante tranquillo* (track 5, 10'48").

In the Elgar, Rostal is just as idiomatic, with a powerful, thrusting reading of the first movement and an account of the slow movement that brings out the element of free fantasy. He then plays the finale with a naturally expressive flexibility that relates the movement more than usual to the accompanied cadenza in the composer's Violin Concerto. It is sad that Rostal was working at a time when there were far fewer opportunities to go into the recording studio, but this resurrection of three long-buried recordings is most welcome. The clarity of Testament's clean, fresh transfers quickly lets one forget any limitations of sound.

Edward Greenfield

FAURÉ • SCHUMANN

N

Fauré Piano Quintet No 2 in C minor, Op 115

Schumann Piano Quintet in E flat, Op 44

James Ehnes, Mira Wang *vns* Naoko

Shimizu *va* Jan Vogler *vc* Louis Lortie *pf*

Sony Classical © SMK93038 (61 minutes: DDD)

Recorded live at the Moritzburg Festival, Germany in August 2003

Fauré – selected comparison:

Darius, Marwood (7/95) (HYPER) CDA66766

Schumann – selected comparison:

Argerich et al (1/96R) (EMI) 557308-2

Musicians at ease with each other and with these composers' virtuoso demands



By the time Fauré finished his Second Piano Quintet in the early spring of 1921 he was almost completely deaf, and all he could hear of the first performance that May was the ecstatic applause afterwards. It's

more than possible that, as with Beethoven, deafness turned his inspiration inwards. The balance throughout this piece needs careful attention, and here receives it, as does the continual chromatic to-ing and fro-ing. Amid this complexity, still harmonically challenging more than 80 years later, few listeners will be troubled by the cello's momentary excursion into the wrong, bass, clef for just two bars in the third movement (3'15").

The combination of deafness and old age removed the danger that Fauré would ever have to play the piano part in public, so he could blithely inform his publisher in 1924 that the *scherzo* should rocket away at crotchet=166, instead of the crotchet=126 on the first edition. This indication, too, is followed punctiliously and the result is breathtaking – *Domus* are not quite so startlingly swift in this movement. Here we have the reckless, virtuoso Fauré, a facet not often displayed in his music, but one without which his portrait is incomplete.

The performance of the Schumann is equally fine, and unmarred by the Romantic rhythmic extravagance of Martha Argerich's version. In the opening paragraph the noble Florestan and the gentle Eusebius are well enough characterised by Schumann not to need any assistance beyond a faithful reading of the score. Rightly or wrongly, I had the impression of an ensemble whose members are absolutely happy with each other: again, the give-and-take is wholly natural, and they make sense of Schumann's dynamic markings, scrupulously followed.

Throughout the disc Louis Lortie's lightish pedalling on his Steingraber, while never dry, allows air into textures that can at times sound overcharged, and the fugal passages in the finale, which likewise can sound dutiful, are dispatched with élan. The recording, made at last year's Moritzberg Festival, is resonant but clear. There is no applause or coughing, so either it was made away from an audience or else they were, with some reason, stunned into silence. **Roger Nichols**

FIorenza

Recorder Concertos^a – in A minor; in G minor; in C minor; in F minor. Trio Sonatas^b – in D minor; in B minor

Fêta Rustica (Walter Mammarella Giordano hpd Silvia Colli, Carlo Lazzaroni, Daniele Viri vns Dario Viri va Marcello Scandelli vc Roberto Bevilacqua vlon Giangiacomo Pinardi theo) / Giorgio Matteoli ^arec/^bvc

ASV Gaudeamus © CDGAU331

(65 minutes: DDD)

An individual, sometimes eccentric, voice gets an airing from some energetic players



Nobody knows much about Nicola (or Niccolò) Fiorenza: he taught in a Naples conservatory and played the violin in the royal chapel there around the middle of the 18th century, and died there in 1764. His compositions, mostly from the 1720s, seem to be exclusively instrumental. Those presented here aren't much like any other music of the period that I know.

The concertos, taken to be for recorder rather than transverse flute, are in old-fashioned four-movement form. The textures and structures are often eccentric. One movement in the A minor concerto has fugal *tuttis*, for example;

in the C minor work the violins bustle around in rapid triplets during most of the solo music, while in one movement of the G minor they disport themselves in lively dotted rhythms under the recorder line. The actual invention, too, is often unconventional, even if Fiorenza tends to use a lot of sequences, Vivaldi-style. The scoring with three violins and viola in two of the works leads to some sumptuous string textures (in the F minor the lost original first violin part is carefully reconstructed here). And in the two trio sonatas the writing is often concerto-like, with *ritornelli* in full texture alternating with sections for violin and continuo. The one in B minor has a curious but attractive finale somewhere between gigue and siciliana. Clearly Fiorenza had his own ideas about the genres of his day.

Fêta Rustica, playing one to part, capture something of the individual voice behind this music. The recorder playing of Giorgio Matteoli – who, by the way, plays the cello in the sonatas – is sharp and clear, the strings energetic, too much so perhaps in such fast movements as the finales of the C minor Concerto and the D minor Sonata, where it gets a bit rough. The recording is excessively resonant, and not helped, to my mind, by the use of the theorbo in some of the music in preference to the harpsichord. The F minor and C minor works are indicated in the wrong order on the back and in the booklet. **Stanley Sadie**

HAHN

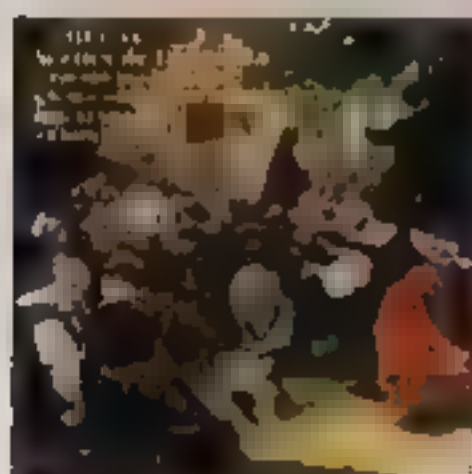
Violin Sonata in C^{ad}. Romance in A^{ad}. Piano Quartet No 3 in G^{abed}. Nocturne in E flat^{ad}. Soliloque et Forlane^{bd}. Si mes vers avaient des ailes^{cd}

^aCharles Sewart vn ^bYuko Inoue va ^cPhilip de Groote vc ^dStephen Coombs pf Hyperion © CDA67391 (62 minutes: DDD)

Easy listening at the highest level, and it's none the worse or less enjoyable for that

'GYPSY CAMPFIRE' MUSIC FROM PLAYERS WHO REALLY UNDERSTAND THE IDIOM

Scènes de la Csárda. Poèmes hongrois, Op 27. *Nouveaux poèmes hongrois*, Op 76
Hagai Shaham vn Arnon Erez pf
Hyperion © CDA67441/2 (150 minutes: DDD)



If ever there were a case of 'the singer, not the song' it's here with these *Scènes de la Csárda*, attractive music played with the sort of heart-tugging abandon that many of us only know from old 78s.

Hagai Shaham is another shining symbol of what I can only call the Fiddlers Renaissance, players not afraid to wear their hearts on their sleeves – Nikolaj Znaider and Robert Gibbs are two more – and who take up the old traditions with fervour and conviction.

Jenő Hubay's music is based largely on popular Hungarian melodies from the 19th century, not folk music in the true 'Magyar' sense as Bartók and Kodály understood it, but the 'pop' of its day. The only one of these *Scènes* that really made it was the fourth, 'Hajre Kati', recorded by the likes of Mischa Elman, Alfredo Campoli and Carl Flesch (not to forget the Classic Buskers). Hubay himself recorded 'The Wavy of Balaton' and

'My Little Turtle Dove' but most of the rest are new to the catalogue.

Many of the tunes are familiar from their use in Brahms, Liszt and Sarasate, either exactly as quoted or as near relations. The creative formula is mostly simple: lavish, rhapsodic opening sections full of major-minor shifts followed by fiery, faster music. Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* seems to have provided a workable template, certainly for No 7 'Kossuth's Melody', dedicated to Leopold Auer (all bear a dedication to a specific virtuoso), though it's the first of the brief but charming *Poèmes hongrois* that actually quotes the tune used by Sarasate.

Possibly the best, or should I say the boldest, of the *Scènes* is No 13, a relatively late piece (1903) dedicated to Jan Kubelík and harking back to late rather than middle Liszt. Shaham really digs into the piece, much as he does elsewhere, his tone firm and even, his *vibrato* varied to reflect different levels of intensity and his use of slides geared to genuine expressive ends, and not as a patronising afterthought designed to 'show us how they used to play.' In this and in his promotion of rare Romantic goodies he follows in the hallowed footsteps of Aaron Rosand, someone whose records of Hubay, Sarasate and Joachim still hold up as classics of their kind. Indeed, I'd describe Shaham's playing as a stylistic cross between Rosand with his famously rich tone and the fragile ardour of the ill-fated Josef Hassid.



Hagai Shaham, a fiddler very much in the mould of Aaron Rosand and Josef Hassid

So, a happy tale from start to finish, kitsch of the highest order served with style and panache both by Shaham (no relation to Gil by the way) and his excellent pianist Arnon Erez. With comprehensive annotation by Arnon Shaham and first-rate production by Eric Wen (a fine violinist and teacher) this seems set to become a benchmark production.

Rob Cowan

CATRIN FINCH THE HARPIST

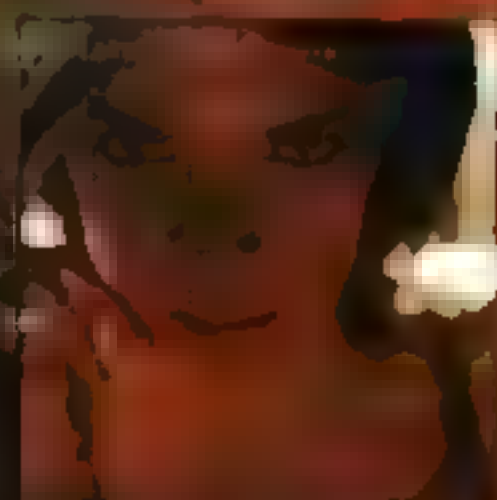
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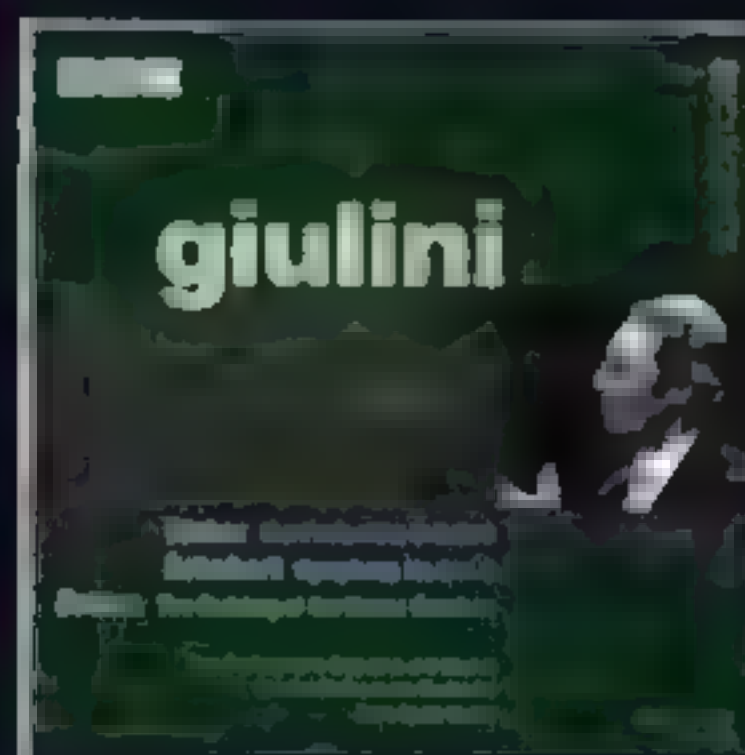


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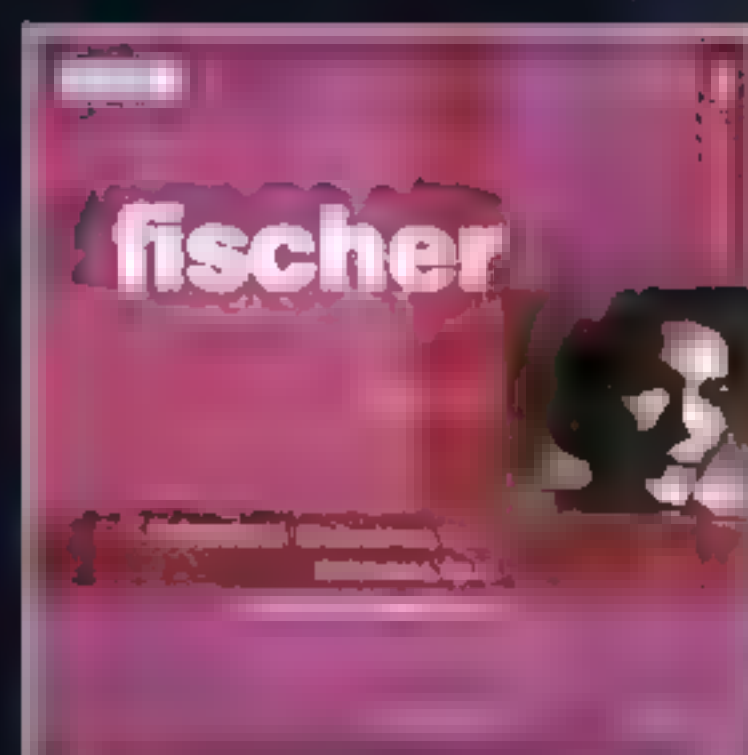
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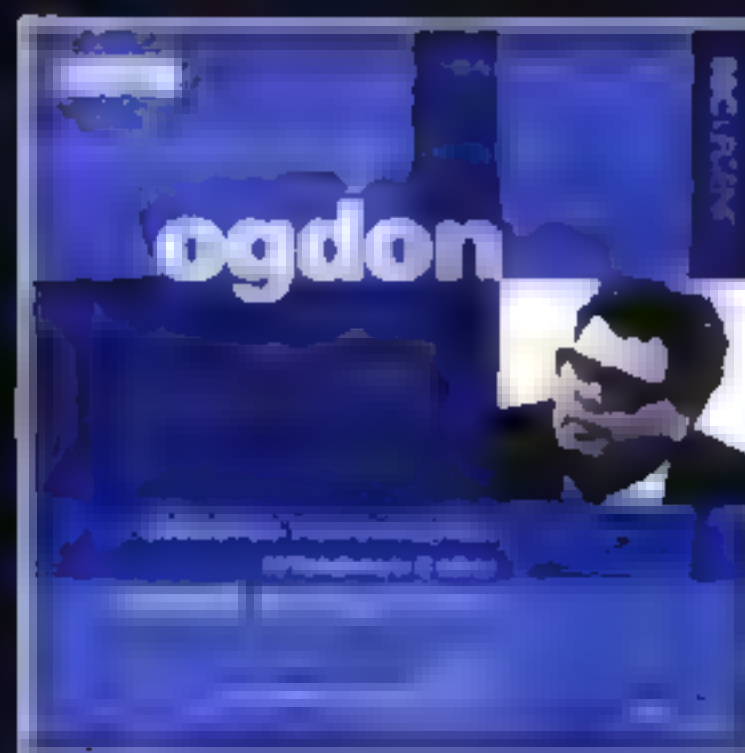
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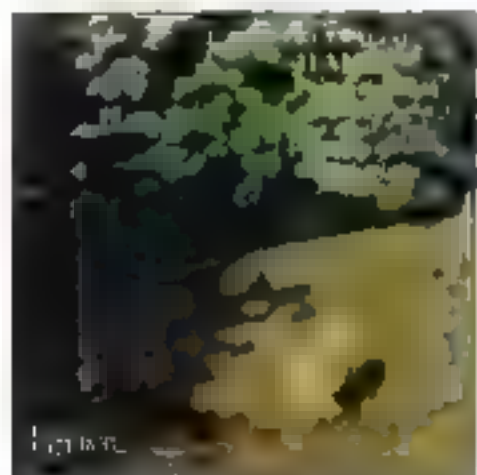
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Calling the judgement of history into question can be stimulating, entertaining, and even useful in the longer term – witness Mendelssohn's rescue from oblivion of the *St Matthew Passion*. For many

years Reynaldo Hahn's reputation has been relegated to the salon circuit where he was such a success in his lifetime, and there are those who regard this as a lazy and reprehensible downgrading of an interesting and individual talent.

I would be the last person to denigrate Hahn's talent. But if you're looking for the traditional fare of sonata discourse – drama, struggle, interplay, counterpoint, tension, resolution and the rest – then Hahn is not your man. He was an almost wholly lyrical composer, and his training with Massenet and high regard for Fauré did nothing to change this. The last movement of the Third Piano Quartet of 1946 sounds like nothing from any other piano quartet I know: it is an amiable ramble, at the end of which Hahn plonks two loud G major chords, rather as though he'd been called away by an emergency phone call to his directorial duties at the Opéra-Comique.

For me, the true Reynaldo is heard in the avowedly lyrical works: the Romance, the Nocturne, the *Soliloquy and Forlane* (where he flirts amusingly with the vulgar), and the cello transcription of the immortal *Si mes vers*. If these constitute easy listening (and I would say they do), then it is easy listening at the highest level, impeccably written, with not an ugly or dull phrase anywhere, and finely served here by performers and technicians alike. Indeed, for sheer beauty of sound this disc takes some beating, even by Hyperion's own standards.

Music by Hahn does still remain to be discovered and popularised. Why, for instance, are there only two versions available of the lovely song 'Lyde' from *Etudes latines*, and one of those by Ninon Vallin and Hahn himself from around 1930? But the 'symphonic' Hahn is, I fear, something of a blind alley. Sometimes history is right.

Roger Nichols

HAYDN

N

Seven Last Words, Op 51 (HobIII/50-56)

Emerson Quartet (Eugene Drucker, Philip Setzer *vn*s Lawrence Dutton *va* David Finckel *vc*)

DG © 474 836-2GH (69 minutes: DDD)

Selected comparison:

Rosamunde Qt (9/01) (ECM) 461 780-2

A sensitive recreation of Haydn's heartfelt reflections on Christ's words on the Cross



The Emerson Quartet's expressive take on Haydn's *Seven Last Words* comes with various details reinstated from the orchestral original, largely motivic material among the woodwinds that was lost

in the scaling-down process. Try the Third Sonata with its brightened top line, (track 4, from 1'21") and compare it with the same passage in its original form at 1'19" (same track) with the Rosamunde Quartet. Then in Sonata 5, *Sitio*, from 2'00", track 7, on the DG, where the Emersons float a violin line over a bowed

version of the opening *pizzicato* motive, as opposed to the simpler and in this instance far slower original (track 6). In the case of the Sixth Sonata Eugene Drucker's booklet-note remarks on 'restored material that seems to anticipate the main motive of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony' but to my ears that association – it occurs at 5'39" in track 8 – is also common to the original.

More significant is the frequent downward transposition of the cello part – 'since the cello and bass parts are usually given on the same line in the orchestral score', as Drucker writes; the textual gain is sometimes quite striking. Some will question the decision to add a quartet transcription of the brief and baleful wind ensemble *Introduzione* that precedes the Fifth Sonata. The nature of the music is certainly altered: it becomes softer, more intimate.

So much for the altered text, though readers need not fear that the contemplative effect of Haydn's narrative is at all hindered. What is more important is the Emersons' deep involvement and response to the biblical prompts. Both leaders excel, Philip Setzer especially in the Third Sonata. And I had never noticed how strongly the painful phrase at 0'11" into the Fourth Sonata resembles a crucial woodwind phrase in the second movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto No 22, music composed two years before *The Seven Last Words*. Indeed, I sense a Mozartian pathos here, a restless quality that among modern rivals is unique to this performance.

As to comparisons, the Rosamundes more approximate a period-instrument style, with a drier tone and less vibrato, more stark though no less expressive in their relatively doleful manner. I'd also like to see back in the catalogue the Borodin Quartet's 1993 Teldec recording (4/95), a truly remarkable performance, expansive and inward-looking. But the Emersons' more cosseting approach gave me considerable pleasure. Whether those textural emendations hold their appeal over a longer period remains to be seen.

Rob Cowan

JONGEN

N

Piano Quartet in E flat, Op 23^a.

Piano Trio, Op 30^b

^aEnsemble Joseph Jongen

(^bEliot Lawson *vn* ^bJacques Dupriez *va*

Mark Drobinsky *vc* ^bDiane Andersen *pf*)

Cyprès © CYP1638 (79 minutes: DDD)

If you can take Jongen's longueurs, there is some rewarding listening here



In previous reviews of the Belgian Joseph Jongen's music I've suggested that he responded well to smaller forces and that perhaps his best music might date from the latter part of his life. The two works recorded here are both early, the Quartet being completed in 1902, the Trio five years later, so I wasn't expecting too much. While I wouldn't say either is an outright success, I found quite a lot more in them second time through, once I'd refamiliarised myself with Jongen's leisurely thought processes.

Loving Messiaen's music as I do, I've never classed myself as exactly an impatient listener, but my main problem with Jongen is the one Stravinsky had with Bruckner: I'm turning pages way ahead of the music.

The Quartet in particular unrolls its 48-minute length steadily and with few surprises, borne along by continuous figuration, mainly in the piano, and while the opening of the first movement is dramatic, it is perhaps too much so. If you begin a movement over 10 long repeated F sharps, you may be giving a sensible indication of the scale of what is to come, but you then have to find ways of increasing the tension from what already sounds suspiciously like a development section.

I found the Trio altogether easier going, because the lighter texture draws Jongen away at times from his somewhat tortured, Chaussonesque introspection. In Jongen's hands this unusual combination of instruments works rather well, removing the fin-de-siècle propensity to do obeisance to the cello's characteristic noblesse.

The piano is recorded a little dominantly, and I could have done with more give in Diane Andersen's phrasing – in the Trio, the solos in the second and third movements give a slight impression of strain, and in the Quartet the absence of much vertical 'air' means one could do with some in the horizontal dimension. But the string playing is excellent, and listeners who don't have a bus to catch may well find this disc gives them pleasure.

Roger Nichols

MARAI • REBEL

N

Marais Pièces de viole – Livre 1, Part 1:

Chaconne; Le tombeau de M Meliton;

Livre 2, Part 1: Couplets de folies: Les folies

d'Espagne; Livre 3, Part 1: Prelude; Livre 3,

Part 2: Sarabande grave; Livre 2, Part 2:

Fantaisie; Livre 5, Part 1: Le petit badinage;

Rondeau le Troilleur; Livre 5, Part 2: Rondeau:

Moitié pincé et moitié coup d'archet

Rebel Les Elémens

Palladian Ensemble (Pamela Thorby *rec*

Rodolfo Richter *vn* Susanne Heinrich *bass viol*

William Carter *theo/bqtr*)

Linn Records CD/SACD © CKD221

(69 minutes: DDD)

Rebel with a cause – slimmed down for a quartet of period players



Here is a recording of Rebel's programmatic orchestral suite with a difference. It takes the 1737 printed source at face value, reflecting the stripped-down score that was feasible to publish, rather than Rebel's original full score. This is *musique de chambre* rather than *de cour* or *de théâtre*. Purchasers of this and other music of the time were encouraged to perform it on whatever instruments they had to hand; but this was at heart a marketing ploy and didn't represent a broadening of what was then considered good taste.

Susanne Heinrich, the skilful viol player of both the Palladian Ensemble and Charivari Agréable, is an industrious reviver of this practice. Her heart – and those of the rest of the group – is certainly in the right place, even if her ears and aesthetic sense occasionally let her down. To anyone who has heard *Les Elémens* performed by an orchestra, this version will sound thin once past the profusion of overtones created by the dissonance of Chaos.

By choosing to set a recorder against a violin and to employ a theorbo, Heinrich has made Rebel sound 'foreign' (as though performed

abroad rather than in Paris). That may have been her underlying intention, but in French music of the day, recorders were never paired with violins (before Lully introduced the transverse flute into his orchestra in the 1680s, they played in pairs or doubled the oboes and/or the violins); secondly, by the 1730s the theorbo had been emphatically eclipsed by the harpsichord as a continuo instrument.

If the textures sound odd, the dynamics and articulation are at least effectively projected. The avian movements (tracks 3 and 4) are charmingly brought off; the Loure, with its arpeggiated references to hunting calls, amuses too.

In Marais' music, Heinrich experiments with expanding solo and duo bass viol textures, increasing the tessitura of the music to accommodate the violin and recorder, again with mixed results. The most successful arrangement is that of the *Folies d'Espagne*, in which William Carter discards his theorbo for a Baroque guitar. Again, in the manner of a performance at home, Heinrich performs the *Prélude* of her A minor collation (drawn from different books of Marais' *pièces*) and all the G major as it was written, for bass viol and continuo. She plays beautifully.

Julie Anne Sadie

MOZART • SAINT-GEORGES N

Mozart String Quartet No 6 in B flat, K159

Saint-Georges String Quartets – in C, G002; in D, G007; in B flat, G067; in G minor, G068

Antarès Quartet (Ruggero Capranico, Dania Draga *vs* Hélène Platone *vs* Cécile Nicolas *vc*)

Intégral Classic © INT221 125
(68 minutes: DDD)

Noteworthy for presenting music by the exotic Chevalier de Saint-Georges but the pairing with Mozart doesn't help his cause

Recordings of Classical-period instrumental music from France are rare, but one composer



who has fared marginally better than most is the exotic figure of Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, the mulatto from Guadeloupe who wowed the Parisian public with his dashing combination of skills as a violinist and fencer. For the most part his two-movement string quartets – three of which, from a collection published in 1777, are offered here – are what you might expect, which is to say pleasant enough music for the salon, but offering little of real consequence; certainly the C and B flat major quartets come nowhere near the originality and resource of Haydn or Mozart.

The G minor Quartet, however, does merit some attention for the emotional intensity of its first movement, an impressive study in sustained elegiac atmosphere. Even allowing for the fact that such minor-key melancholy was popular in Paris at the time, we can at least sense something here of the emotional character of this music's creator – Saint-Georges is recorded as having broken down in tears once when rehearsing an orchestra in music by a recently deceased friend.

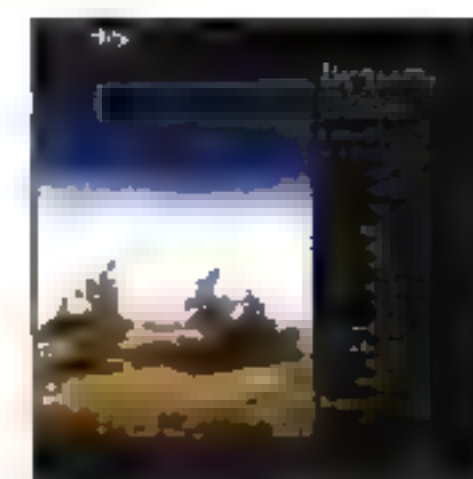
No doubt out of commercial savvy, the Antarès Quartet are presenting their continuing exploration of Saint-Georges's quartets alongside the six early *Milanese* quartets of Mozart, composed four years before the Saint-Georges works on this disc. Though they hardly represent their composer at his best, the comparison of even the teenage Mozart with the adult Saint-Georges is a telling one – if the latter ever wrote anything as dynamic as Mozart's G minor *Allegro* we have yet to hear it. And bringing on the Mozart is revealing of its performers, too: though the Antarès play with enough lusty conviction for Saint-Georges, what should be the graceful opening *Andante* of the Mozart shows them to be damagingly lacking in refinement of both tone and tuning. Really, a disc for the curious only.

Lindsay Kemp

REGER

Viola Sonata in B flat, Op 107. Three Viola Suites, Op 131*d*. Romanze (arr Sitt)
Nobuko Imai *vs* **Ronald Brautigam** *pf*
BIS © BIS-CD1211 (64 minutes: DDD)

The music is less than top class, but we do get wonderful viola playing from Imai



I've somewhat contradictory reactions to this disc: great enthusiasm for the playing – but a realisation that Reger's music, for all its inventiveness and mastery of form, doesn't do much for me. Hearing

Nobuko Imai, one regrets that the viola has never become a familiar recital instrument alongside the violin and cello: she's the equal of any string player, yet presents the viola as a unique instrumental voice. The reason, of course, is that the viola lacks the extensive repertoire of Classical and Romantic masterpieces enjoyed by cellists and violinists.

Reger's Op 107 was, like the two similar works by Brahms, composed as a clarinet sonata. The viola alternative makes a particularly strong impact in the middle movements – the stormy *Vivace* with its slow, gloomy middle section, and the harmonically rich, extravagantly lyrical *Adagio*. Ronald Brautigam balances his chords wonderfully well in what could sound like an excessively thick piano part, achieving clarity as well as a wholehearted, passionate delivery.

The suites for unaccompanied viola represent another balancing act. The presence of Bach is felt throughout, yet Reger skilfully avoids any feeling that he's writing pastiche, taking Bach's chromatic inflections a little bit further, or making the phrases longer, more expansive and intense. It's not exactly virtuoso music, but Imai's stature is revealed in her beautifully exact double stopping, perfect rhythmic poise, and the way she searches out and presents the true character of each piece. Great viola playing!

Duncan Druce

NATIVE PERFORMERS WHO OFFER BOTH LUSHNESS AND DELICACY WHEN THEY ARE NEEDED

Altschuler *Mélodie on a Theme of Rachmaninov* (ed Hayroudinoff)

Rachmaninov Deux Morceaux de Salon, Op 2. Cello Sonata in G minor, Op 19. Prelude in G flat, Op 23 No 10 (arr Brandukov). Lied in F minor. Vocalise in E flat minor, Op 34 No 14

Alexander Ivashkin *vc*

Rustem Hayroudinoff *pf*

Chandos © CHAN10095 (67 minutes: DDD)

Rachmaninov Op 19 – selected comparison:
Shafra, Flier (10/96) (REVE) RV10017

Though the Sonata is very much the main work here, the shorter items are all attractive and interesting, if somewhat unvaried in mood. The Op 2 pieces are remarkably individual, mature music for a 19-year-old, and even the brief Lied, from two years earlier, (sometimes entitled *Song without Words* or *Romance*) has a distinctive and charming character. The *Vocalise* is heard in the higher key in which it was originally written, without the modifications to the melody line that the work's original interpreter, the singer Antonina Nezhdanova, had insisted on.



and Rustem Hayroudinoff has done wonders in constructing a piano accompaniment that's persuasively Rachmaninavian.

Alexander Ivashkin and Rustem Hayroudinoff are both players in the great Russian virtuoso tradition, and in the Sonata the piano flourishes all come over with the necessary brilliance, while Ivashkin's tone is strong enough to sail above the most elaborate accompaniments. They're helped by excellent recorded sound, full and well defined. It's obvious, too, that both players are strongly committed to the music. In the lyrical sections of the first movement and the *Andante*, they create a soft, dreamy atmosphere in which the rhythm is allowed to drift; here I prefer the more directly melodic approach of Daniil Shafran and Jacob Flier on their magnificent 1956 recording. But it's a fine performance, on the grand scale, stressing the affinity between the Sonata and Rachmaninov's previous opus, the Second Piano Concerto.

Duncan Druce

The Altschuler *Mélodie* was written down from memory decades after the original transcript of a Rachmaninov improvisation had been lost. It's a very pleasant piece in a romantic Russian style,



Rustem Hayroudinoff proves himself to be 'a player in the great Russian virtuoso tradition'

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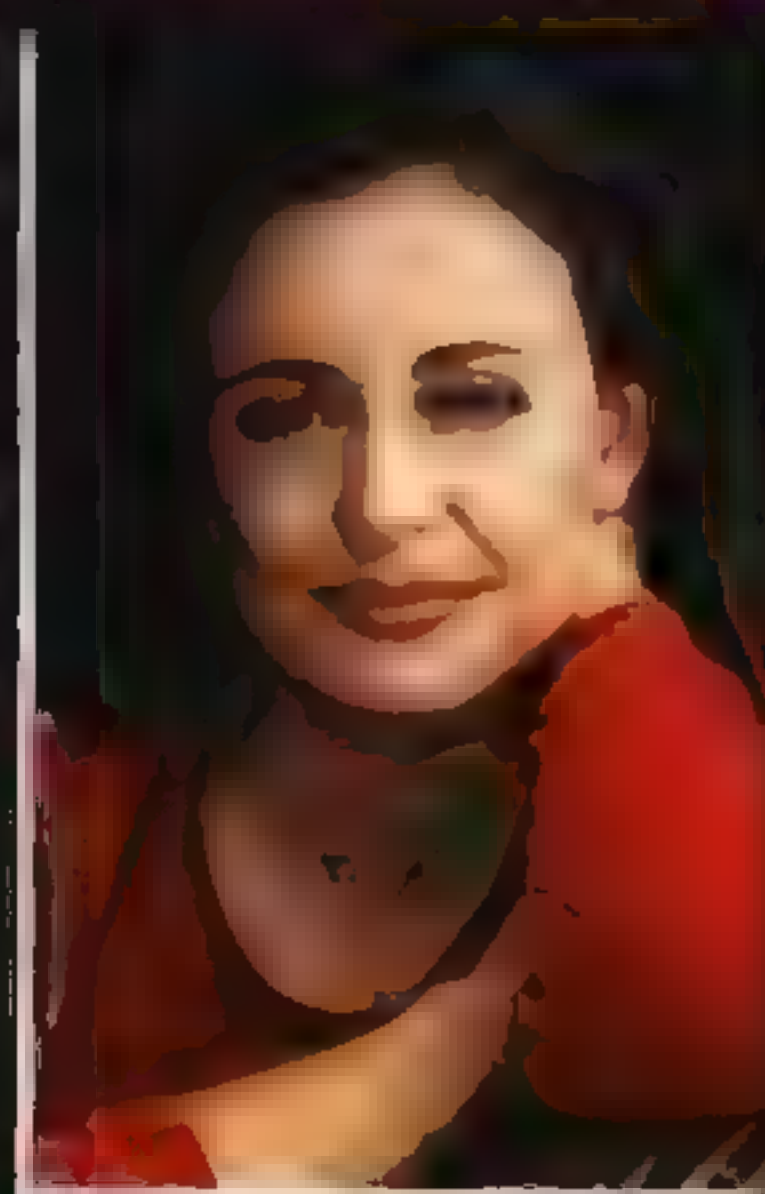
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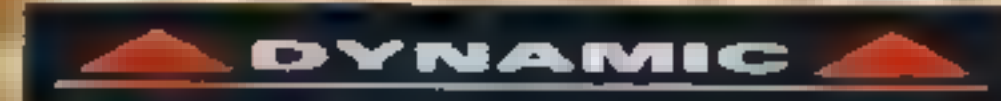
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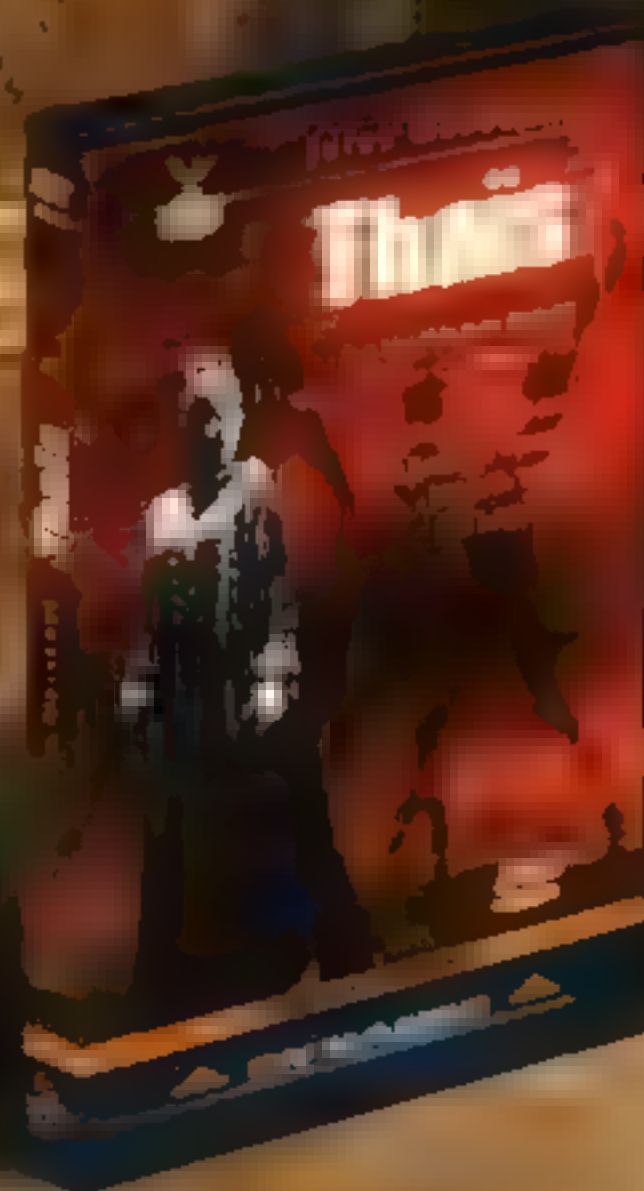
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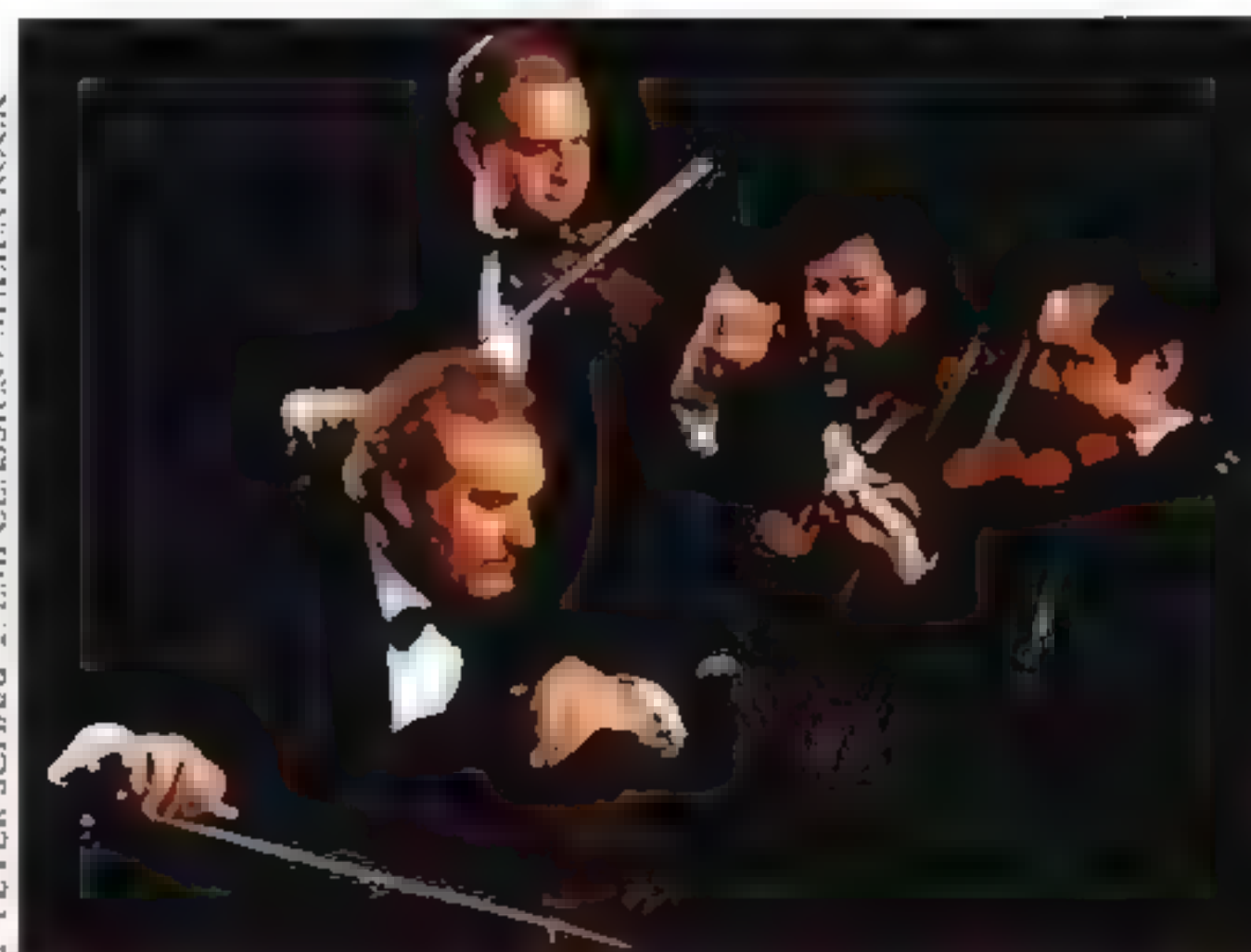
Duncan Druce enjoys a feast of fine string quartet playing

The **Alban Berg Quartet** demonstrate their prowess in Mozart on two recently reissued sets, both showing how the group can inwardly animate the music. Each melodic phrase is individually shaped, and Mozart's textures are given a naturally expressive aspect that invites our participation as listeners. The five quartets on *Elatus* were recorded in the late 1970s; the sound is perfectly good, though there's no denying that the later, digital versions for EMI have an extra degree of clarity and realism. The earlier performances don't have quite the same expressive range and freedom as the later ones; on the other hand there's a consistent beauty of sound that's sometimes lost on the EMI accounts, where the *fortes* can seem pressurised, as though the players are working hard to fill a large auditorium. This happens in the first movement of K378, where the earlier version is more friendly. However, in the *Adagio* of K458 the 1990 performance, with a freer sense of tempo, gains from being more bold and outgoing.

It's well worth pushing the boat out for the seven-CD EMI set, anyway, because, as well as the superior recorded sound, better presentation (*Elatus* can't even be bothered to name the quartet members) and the advantage of having all 10 mature quartets, the two 'extra' discs are especially valuable. The K515 and K516 Quintets are a real treat; the first movement of the G minor has an unusual urgency, and the lovely, balanced phrasing emphasises the singing, melodic nature of the music. The disc of concert performances with Brendel is another high point; in the K414 Concerto one may miss the effect of 'proper' orchestral *tutti*s, but the quartet's accompaniments are exceptionally refined and intimate. Brendel adds continuo realisation to the orchestral passages, sometimes filling in the optional wind parts. He's in particularly sprightly form in the finale.

I have mixed feelings about the **Panocha Quartet's** two-CD Schubert collection. The recorded sound is good, with D87 and D804 given a brighter, more edgy timbre than the other two works. The playing is accomplished, expressive and sensitive. The Panocha's awareness of the shape of the music leads naturally to holding up the rhythm, in order to turn a corner elegantly, or to give emphasis to a particular note. These *tenuti*, however, often last too long, in the right place but drawing too much attention to themselves. There are irritating examples in D804's Minuet, and at one or two places in D703 (otherwise a lovely performance, this). In the outer movements of the G major Quartet, too, there are some extreme and, to me, unconvincing changes of tempo. The simpler, more innocent style of D87 inspires a more uncomplicated interpretation: a delightful account, bringing to our attention that this is one of the most naturally melodious of Schubert's early works.

The A minor and G major Quartets also appear on the **Hungarian Quartet's** Schubert



1. PETER SCHAAF 2. EMI CLASSICS / SHEILA ROCK

The Cleveland and Alban Berg Quartets: 'excellent guides' to Beethoven and Mozart

set, along with *Death and the Maiden* and the C major Quintet, with László Varga. Four such substantial works only fit on to two CDs because the first-movement repeats are omitted. The well-balanced, but airless recordings were made in Paris between 1958 and 1970. Hearing the Hungarians again after some time lead me to a new appreciation of their perfect blend – how hard they must have studied to make their bow strokes match so exactly! The quartet was a prime example of a post-war style of string playing that eschewed any hint of sentimentality (so no slides), and placed great stress on clear articulation. This can do the music a disservice – the syncopated accompaniment in the middle section of the Quintet's slow movement conveys a sense of liveliness rather than agitation – and there are certain places, particularly in D810, where the mysterious, romantic shadows of Schubert's imagination are lit up rather too glaringly, by both playing and recording. But the collection is worth acquiring just for D887, performed quite magnificently. The first movement and the finale have that sense of direction that's missing with the Panocha, whilst many moments – the *scherzo's* trio is one – sound breathtakingly beautiful.

The generous selection of Beethoven from the **Borodin Quartet** was recorded in England in 1987-89. The sound is somewhat variable – Op 59 No 1 and Op 18 No 5 seem very slightly fuzzy. The performances are fine sounding, big and dramatic. My reservations are centred on two things – a reluctance to play really quietly that, for example, lessens the air of mystery and uncertainty in the first movement of Op 132 – and a preference for moderate, comfortable speeds. The first movement of Op 95 and the finale of Op 59 No 3 still make a fine effect despite being way behind Beethoven's metronomic suggestions, but the Minuet of Op 18 No 4 is simply too slow.

The **Cleveland Quartet** adopt authentically brisk speeds for Beethoven's quicker movements, but they get round the problems they might cause through flexibility of tempo, achieved with great subtlety and refinement.

There's a very sophisticated control of balance, too, allowing important inner lines to emerge clearly, with a minimum of extra pressure. The Clevelanders, indeed, make excellent guides to the Beethoven quartets; each movement, one feels, has been well considered, every important detail presented clearly, and the overall character strongly projected. Inevitably, there are movements that don't quite hit the mark – I found the *Andante* of Op 18 No 3 very sticky (in rhythm) and, in Op 130 the 'Danza tedesca' is surely too slow and serious. Far more frequently, the spirit is just right: three notable examples are Op 59 No 3's flowing, graceful, yet deeply melancholic *Andante*, the wonderfully witty, conversational account of Op 135's first movement and the brilliant violin playing in the *scherzo* of Op 18 No 6. The discs are very well recorded and available separately. If you want to try out the series, start with Op 132 and 135. ●

THE RECORDINGS

Mozart String Quartets Nos 14-17, 20
Alban Berg Qt
Elatus ② 2564 60678-2 (132 minutes: ADD)

Mozart Chamber Music **Alban Berg** Qt et al
EMI ① ⑦ 585581-2 (6 hours 13 minutes: DDD)

Schubert String Quartets Nos 10, 12, 13, 15
Panocha Qt
Supraphon ② ② SU3746-2 (120 minutes: DDD)

Schubert String Quartets Nos 13-15 etc
Hungarian Qt; Varga
EMI Encore ② 585526-2 (157 minutes: ADD)

Beethoven String Quartets **Borodin** Qt
Virgin Classics ① ④ 562258-2 (4 hours 7 minutes: DDD)

Beethoven String Quartets **Cleveland** Qt
Op 18 Nos 1-3 Telarc ② CD80382 (77 minutes: DDD)
Opp 130; 133 Telarc ② CD80422 (62 minutes: DDD)
Op 59 No 2-3 Telarc ② CD80268 (69 minutes: DDD)
Opp 132; 135 Telarc ② CD80427 (69 minutes: DDD)
Opp 18 No 6; 59 No 1 Telarc ② CD80229
(64 minutes: DDD)

INSTRUMENTAL

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BEETHOVEN • REUBKE

Beethoven Piano Sonata No 21, 'Waldstein,' in C. Variations in F on the Trio 'Tändeln und Scherzen' from Süßmayer's Solimann II, WoO76 **Reubke** Piano Sonata in B flat minor **Richard Raymond** *pf*
Analekta Fleurs de Lys © FL23172
(65 minutes: DDD)

A strong case is made for the wayward Reubke, and the Beethoven impresses



Many are the echoes of Liszt's B minor Sonata in this one by Julius Reubke (1834-58), completed the year before he died. But Liszt's work is cogently argued; Reubke's is not. Though harmonically remarkably advanced, it is loosely constructed: its heroic elements sometimes border on bluster while its rhapsodic ones tend to descend into navel-gazing. Richard Raymond probably wouldn't agree with this assessment. He lavishes attention on the work and indulges its foibles, and in the process he shows that he is no mean pianist and, better still, no mean musician, either.

Raymond's attention to the bass-line is an important aspect of his style. You'll also hear it in the chords that open Beethoven's sonata, but he doesn't drive the music relentlessly. He is flexible with the rhythm, thus revealing the many contrasts that make up the drama of the first movement. The introduction, if not ideally hushed, is nevertheless a gravely played *Adagio molto*, as it ought to be. Raymond doesn't ease into the finale as enchantingly as Emil Gilels (and isn't punctilious enough about the pedal markings) but he makes it a powerful concluding statement without bashing out the notes, particularly in the C minor section that is full of accented octaves. Very good indeed, and the disc is rounded off with a performance of the Variations that recognises its chuckling good humour. The recording is fuller-toned for Reubke than Beethoven but this is no deterrent.

Nalen Anthoni

BLASCO DE NEBRA

Six Keyboard Sonatas, Op 1^b – No 1 in C minor; No 2 in B flat; No 5 in F sharp minor. Six Pastorelas & 12 Sonatas – Pastorela in G^b; Pastorela in B minor^a; Pastorela in E minor^b; Sonata in D minor^a; Sonata in D^a
Carole Cerasi *afp/bpd*

Metronome © METCD1064 (76 minutes: DDD)

A byway of Spanish and pre-Classical music maybe, but certainly a pleasing one

You may well imagine that Manuel Blasco de Nebra, organist of Seville Cathedral at the time of his death in 1784 at the age of only 34, was one of those Spanish keyboard composers who fell under the influence of Domenico Scarlatti without demonstrating his unique creative spark. Ultimately you would be right, I suppose. But glib



dismissals are not the stuff of *Gramophone* readers, so it is to be hoped that curiosity will lead more than a few towards this selection from Nebra's small surviving output (only 30 works), which has enough pleasing

and quirky personality of its own to leave you both wondering why it is still so little known and regretting that more of it does not survive. Blasco de Nebra's compositions fall into two basic types: sonatas consisting of two movements, the first slow, rangy and often chromatically searching, the second fast and finger-testing; and three-movement *pastorelas* in which the highly original central movements, themselves called *pastorelas*, are full of unexpected rhythmic games. Scarlatti's stylistic influence is unmistakable in the later man's melodic cut, harmonic language and general keyboard know-how, as well as his penchant for worrying away at some little melodic hook – though in his case with a greater tendency to release the resulting tension into a longer, more winding theme. It is perhaps in the more relaxed atmosphere which he thus creates that Blasco de Nebra differs most from Scarlatti; his, after all, is music of a later age, and his vivid virtuosity and piquant harmonies seem to lead not to the Italian's compelling nerviness but to a world altogether more sunny and comfortably benign.

Carole Cerasi plays these charming works with obvious affection and understanding, triumphantly justifying their revival on two 18th-century instruments from the Finchcocks Collection: a strong-boned Portuguese harpsichord and a gentle Austrian fortepiano. Both instruments have real presence and character, as does Cerasi's playing, which is as crisp and well thought-out as ever, and dashing virtuosity in those frantic finales. New recordings from this musician are always worth waiting for; let us hope we will hear her before too long in more mainstream harpsichord repertoire.

Lindsay Kemp

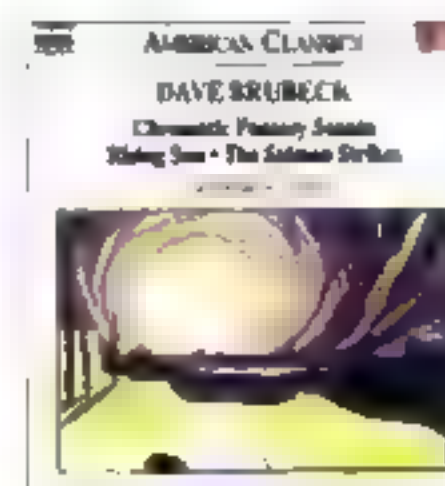
BRUBECK

Chromatic Fantasy Sonata. The Rising Sun. Five Pieces from 'Two-Part Adventures'. The Salmon Strikes. Tritonis
John Salmon *pf*

Naxos American Classics © 8 559212
(55 minutes: DDD)

Strong performances of a jazz giant's evocatively coloured solo piano pieces

A former student of Milhaud, octogenarian pianist/composer Dave Brubeck made his name in the early 1960s leading a jazz quartet with a famous penchant for exotic time signatures. This fine disc of his more formal piano pieces was born from long years of dedication by American pianist John Salmon. He first met the jazz icon 30 years ago as a hopeful teenager and has now



edited Brubeck's piano scores for publication.

As their titles indicate, the *Chromatic Fantasy Sonata* and *Five Pieces* from *Two-Part Adventures* draw their inspiration from Bach, with the former work quoting the dramatic initial bars of his *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue* before going its own sweetly lyrical way. Previously recorded in a version for the Brodsky Quartet, Brubeck's four-movement, half-hour Fantasy fuses Baroque counterpoint with touches of ragtime and the composer's characteristically sanguine melodicism. It's the more ruminative beauties of the interior Chorale and Fugue movements that resonate longest in the mind, particularly the grand, grave resolution of the three-subject Fugue.

The brief *Five Pieces* are each marked by an undeniable tunefulness, with the sprightly 'Bach Again' playing off the C minor Prelude from the first book of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. 'Brotherly Love' and 'Winter Ballad' are inventive solo realizations of music originally for Brubeck's jazz quartet, while 'The Eleven Disciples' comes from the composer's cantata *Voice of the Holy Spirit* (recently recorded by Telarc). The disc's jazziest moments come with 'Chasin' Yourself', 50 lightweight seconds of Bach as bop.

More redolent of Ravel, the 13-minute, piquantly attractive *Tritonis* began as a concert work for flute and guitar. The solo piano arrangement here would have benefited from a performance that more subtly modulated the expressive transitions between the score's lyrical and more demonstrative sides. The title of another work here, *The Salmon Strikes* – Brubeck's tribute to the pianist's 'strong attack' – unwittingly points up the tendency for Salmon's tone to become strident in louder passages.

Another former vehicle for his quartet, *Rising Sun* finds Brubeck in jazz ballad mode, evoking not so much dawn in the Orient as the wee hours in an Anytown cocktail bar. Throughout the disc, Salmon plays with rhythmic strength and remarkable digital clarity, although his palette seems to lack the half-shades that would bring Brubeck's more impressionistic pictures fully to life. The recording is clear and close, not inappropriate for much of the music but underlining this reservation.

Bradley Bamberger

CHOPIN

Four Ballades. Four Scherzos
Stephen Hough *pf*

Hyperion © CDA67456 (72 minutes: DDD)

Playing that scales the heights: these inexhaustible pieces really do catch fire

This is astonishing piano playing and Chopin interpretation that, at its best, fully measures up to the greatness of these pieces. And to their freshness, not least: the Ballades and Scherzos, along with just about all Chopin's mature work, have

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Christopher Hogwood *clav*

Metronome © METCD1056 (72 minutes: DDD)

Christopher Hogwood's incisive mind regularly leads to strong and imaginative concepts and this, the first of a series of clavichord discs dedicated to Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, is a perfect example. The clavichord has a history of domestic usage, the intimate nature of its utterances seeming both exquisite and slightly enigmatic. Its main mechanical feature of stretching strings gives the player the 'touch' to grade dynamics, alter pitch through vibrating and other idiomatic colouring. These are delicate nuances with an instrument of such softness, offered as fleeting gestures, usually for the player's ears alone.

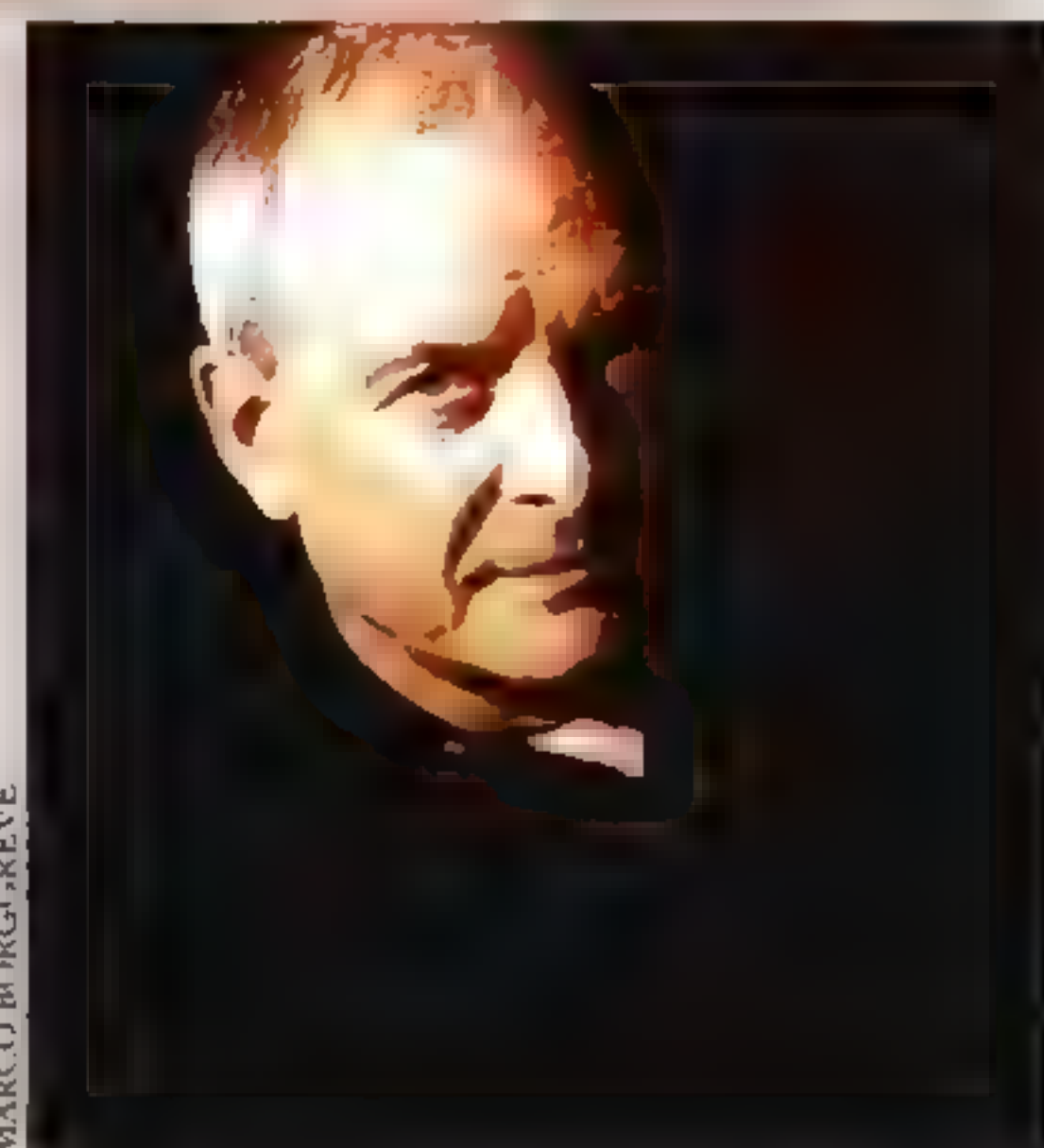
We know from Forkel (probably via CPE or WF Bach) that Bach loved the instrument since it provided a means of expression which was quite distinct from the up-front harpsichord and undeveloped fortepiano. Hogwood



uses three clavichords of very particular tonal quality and provides an appropriate level of added interest in that all the works comprise an element of arrangement. This concurs with the idea

that a work in Bach's day was a living organism, ripe for review and revisiting. As ever with Hogwood, the musical ideas are fortified with deft historical reference. He quotes FC Griepenkerl (in a 1819 edition of the Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue) suggesting that Bach must be treated objectively, banning 'everything which is fashionable, subjective and individual'. Hogwood's revealing subsequent remark, 'a lesson for today', implies that a personal stamp is undesirable: a salutary reminder of the early '80s blow-torch era. In fact, Hogwood brings plenty of individuality, at best a thoughtful and devotional reading of *O Gott, du frommer Gott*, played on a Schmah copy from Finchcocks with a lovely cushioned and even tone.

While the Bodechtel clavichord provides contrast for the shorter vignettes (recalling Violet Woodhouse's famous description of the clavichord as 'a packet of pins'), the larger Hass is used for the Chromatic Fantasia and the Partita in A minor (which is a transposed transcription of the violin Partita in D minor); it is as extrovert and bold as you get with a clavichord. Hogwood takes



MARCO BORGREVE

Christopher Hogwood: 'as ever, the musical ideas are fortified with deft historical reference'

a dignified and measured view of the Partita, though the sarabande lacks in fantasy and the willingness to explore the possibilities of the instrument. The chaconne, arranged by Lars Ulrik Mortensen, contains a few questionable harmonic and figurative quirks, but Hogwood glides through them fluidly and genially. Quite the antithesis of Busoni and yet it leads the mind and ears into revitalised pastures of how this music can be experienced afresh.

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood



been constantly before the public, and Stephen Hough's accounts of them offer plenty of refreshment to spirit and senses.

It's not given to many pianists to play them as well as he. I like his distribution of them here, chronological but alternating one of each – which may not make a recital to consume at one go but helps to point up their diversity and individual character, as well as Chopin's mastery of large forms. Hough is unfailingly thoughtful; there's not a note that hasn't been cared for. Just a few of them (Third Ballade, for example) are picked out of the texture and strung together for our delectation in a way that strikes me as otiose, at least when I'm in a sober-sides kind of mood. Here and there (Fourth Ballade) you may be made aware that he has a marvellous left hand; well, come on, why not enjoy it? The surfaces of his presentations are very 'worked', more redolent of application, maybe, than of organic growth. But emphatically this is not superficial playing and, heavens, how the performances catch fire.

He inclines to the accepted view that Chopin's large forms have a 'plot' that culminates in a tumult or a whirlwind of activity. My taste in the coda of the Fourth Ballade is for the tempest to be a mite less furious, so that the ear has more time to register what's going on. The closing pages of No 1, on the other hand, have an exemplary finish and allure. Most distinguished of the Ballades here, to my mind, is No 2, where Hough perceives the invasion of one kind of music by another in all its subtlety and lays out a spellbinding seven-minute drama. This is one of the best accounts I can remember hearing.

He has interesting points to make in the *Scherzos*, too. Where many a player is content to let recurring sections and paragraphs register simply as

the music we heard before, with him they sound different in some degree, affected by what has come in between. I like that very much and warm particularly to the thrust and the inflections of his pacing in Nos 2 and 3. Towards the end of No 4, much of it exquisitely done, I have developed a reservation about the way his *rubato* masks Chopin's large-scale rhythmic scheme. Hough is a player who's always doing something. Sometimes I wish he were doing less. I've no doubt, however, that this is an issue out of the ordinary; welcome, too, for being handsomely recorded and produced.

Stephen Plaistow

F COUPERIN

Pièces de clavecin, Livre 4 – 21st Ordre (E minor); 24th Ordre (A minor-major); 25th Ordre (E flat-C major-C minor); 26th Ordre (F sharp minor); 27th Ordre (B minor)

Angela Hewitt *pf*

Hyperion © CDA67480 (73 minutes: DDD)

Hewitt understands Couperin, but does the piano?

The music in the second of Angela Hewitt's three CDs devoted to Couperin's *pièces de clavecin* and performed on the modern piano, is drawn from his Fourth Book, published in 1730, three years before his death. Though cast unusually in three related keys, rather than a single one, and lacking two movements Couperin admits he couldn't find in time to publish, the opening *ordre* on the disc, with its French *ouverture*, intriguing portraiture and evocative imagery neatly encapsulates many of the finest qualities of the collection. Hewitt's playing is equally representative of her general approach to his music. Her touch is amazingly light, incredibly crisp and alert to the possibilities afforded by the piano. She understands the



rhythmic logic of French Baroque music; she has grasped its scale and adapted her playing to it. She is attentive to Couperin's instructions – 'La Muse Victorieuse' is audacious, 'Les Ombres Errantes' float *languissamment*. Hewitt has found her way into Couperin's world.

Shocking as it sounds, the piano itself isn't really up to the task she has set it. Couperin's music loses much of its character when transferred to the piano, however skilled its practitioner. By sheer necessity, everything has to be executed in shades of *piano*; that is not the case on the harpsichord. We may hear Couperin's counterpoint more clearly, but only because we have lost the shimmering blur of overtones produced by the plucking action of the harpsichord. She evokes Schumann by way of compensation: her carefully judged *rubato*, *legato* basses and delicately shaded dynamics confound Baroque expectations. In the aptly titled 'La Mysterieuse', for example, her application of *rubato* in the passage alternating between a B flat and a B natural reduces a moment of harmonic piquancy to chromatic dithering.

But one has to admire Hewitt's skill and attention to detail. Here's the paradox: on the harpsichord ornaments increase resonance whereas on the piano they are percussive, jarring the music. Couperin would seem to have intended the passage of thirds in the second section of 'Les Pavots' ('Poppies') to convey a certain narcotic-induced nonchalance; certainly that is the effect on the harpsichord, though sadly not on the piano. All that remains of Couperin's chimera is an elegantly executed feat of agility. I would love to hear Hewitt play these on the harpsichord.

Julie Anne Sadie

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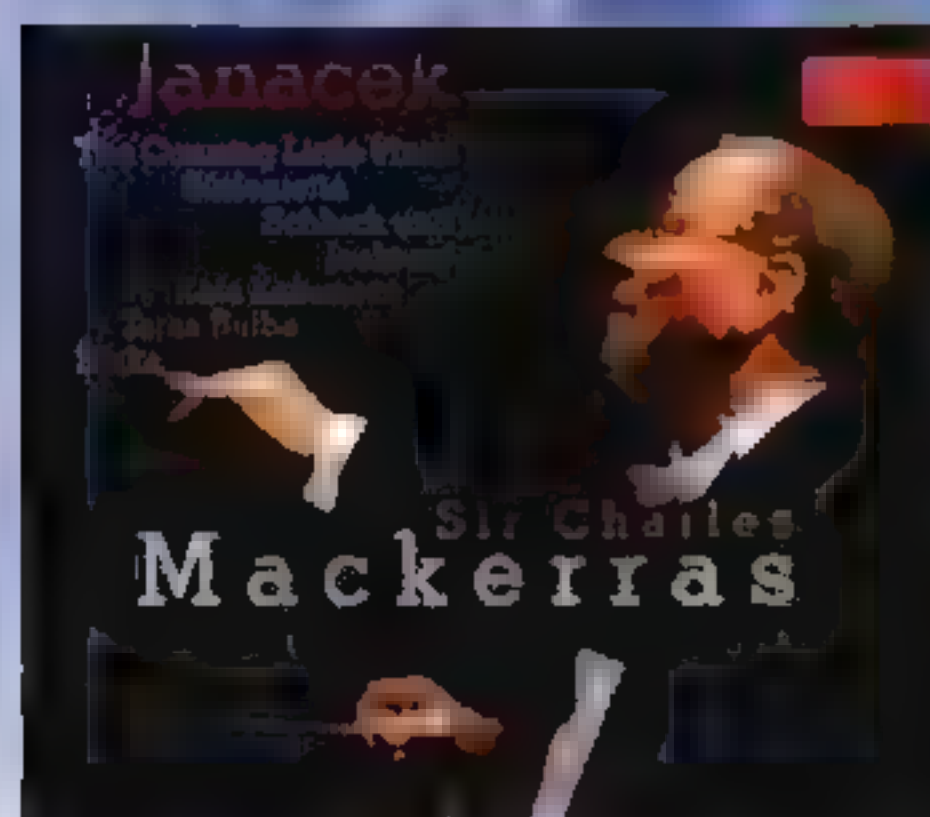
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CONTROVERSIAL PROGRAMMING AND PLAYING IN WHICH SCHUMANN TAKES A BACK SEAT

Etudes symphoniques, Op 13. *Bunte Blätter*, Op 99 – Nos 4–8. *Fantasie in C*, Op 17. *Arabeske in C*, Op 18.
Mikhail Pletnev pf
DG © 474 813-2GH (77 minutes: DDD)

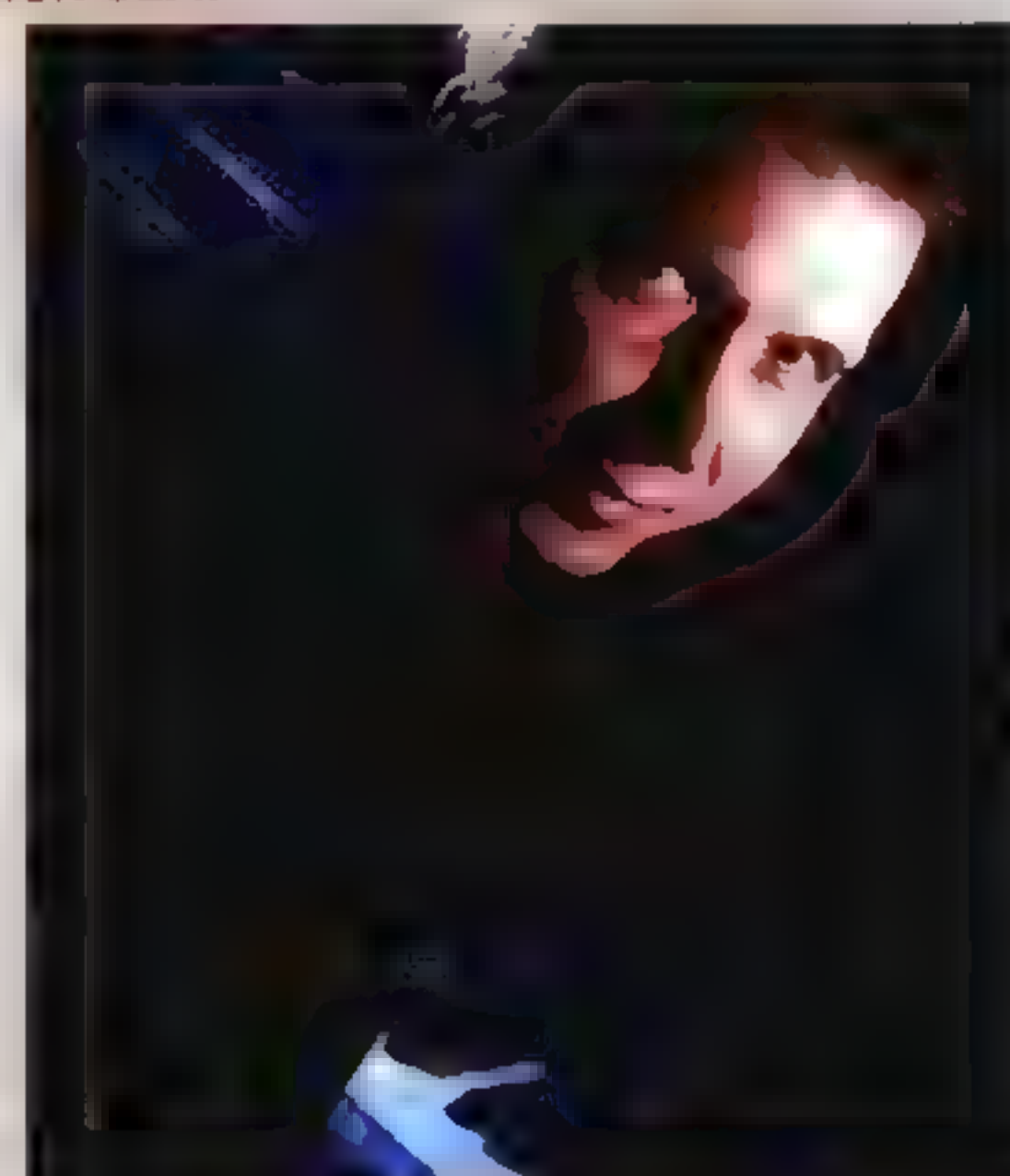


This strange mish-mash of a recital could only be redeemed by the finest artistry. But while there will be those who celebrate what they see as Pletnev's charisma and originality, others will surely balk at playing so personalised and excessive, so devoid of 'naturalness'.

More basically, how unsatisfying in the *Etudes symphoniques* to sandwich two of the five posthumous studies between Nos 8 and 9, omit No 10 entirely, and then later offer only the five 'Albumblätter' from the *Bunte Blätter*.

Even more disturbing is the perverse celebration of Pletnev at the expense of Schumann. An initial feeling of audacity, of Schumann seemingly improvised or rhapsodised on the spot, gives way to a sense of wilfulness. Fits and starts replace the line or impetus of Etude No 12 and in the *Fantasie* Pletnev nails his garish colours to the mast with such defiance that little remains of Schumann's teeming and kaleidoscopic romanticism. Hear Pletnev at his most provoking at 3'30" or in frequent lapses into bombast and you are sadly aware of the difference between self-serving rhetoric and genuine musicianship.

The 'Albumblätter' and *Arabeske* come less perversely attired though even here it is hard not to feel that Schumann's freshness, his fragility and ardour, are compromised. No comparison, then, with artists of the stature of Anda, Cortot, Pollini and Perahia in the *Symphonic Studies* or Pollini, Richter, Argerich and Annie Fisher in the *Fantasie*. **Bryce Morrison**



Mikhail Pletnev's Schumann: 'charismatic and original' or 'devoid of "naturalness"'?

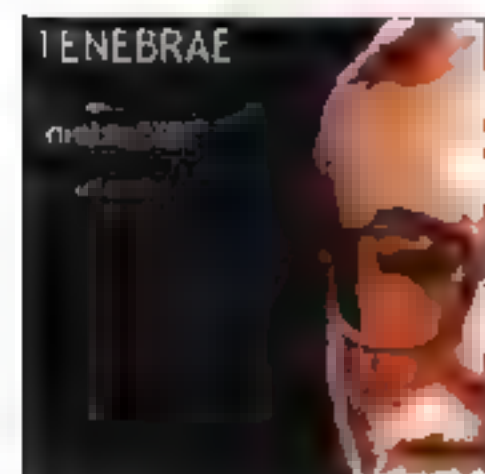
MCCABE

N

Aubade (Study No 4). *Capriccio* (Study No 1). *Evening Harmonies* (Study No 7). *Intermezzi*. *Scrunch* (Study No 8). *Sostenuto* (Study No 2). *Tenebrae*. *Variations*
Tamami Honma pf
Metier © MSVCD92071 (72 minutes: DDD)

Aubade, Variations – selected comparison:
McCabe (BMS) BMS424CD

A splendid release includes first recordings of three studies and the imposing *Tenebrae*



Hard on the heels of her Dutton disc featuring John McCabe's Second Piano Concerto (3/04), Honma plays eight of his solo pieces, including some of his most characterful music.

Five of the eight large-scale studies that he has intermittently composed since *Capriccio* and *Sostenuto* in 1969 are here; the most recent composed in 2001 in homage to Dukas (*Evening Harmonies*) and Domenico Scarlatti (the brief, scherzo-like *Scrunch*, full of appropriately scrunchy harmonies). Hopefully, Honma and Metier will complete the series on a future disc, coupled perhaps with the magnificent *Haydn Variations* and *Fantasy* on a theme of Liszt.

Make no mistake: Honma is a superb player. The composer provides his imprimatur of her in the booklet, but hearing her one appreciates immediately how technically able and interpretatively alert she is. Comparing her account of the 1963 *Variations* to McCabe's own, she almost matches him for power and catches its febrile intensity to perfection. McCabe has repeatedly said that he has no interest in writing a piano sonata, a shame since the *Variations* – practically a sonata anyway – give a tantalising hint of what it would sound like. So does *Tenebrae*, the large-scale fantasia written in 1992–93 for Barry Douglas. Honma's view of this magisterial utterance will no doubt develop and broaden in coming years, but even now it is a remarkably eloquent achievement.

Metier's sound is typically clear without being clinical, the acoustic picture warm and full. If you want a single disc of McCabe's piano pieces this newcomer will not displace his BMS programme, but neither is it second best either. My advice is, buy both. Very strongly recommended. **Guy Rickards**

PASQUINI

N

Harpsichord Sonata No 14 in A minor^b. *Toccata con lo scherzo del cucco*. *Toccata* – in F^a; in G minor; in G^a. *Passagagli* – in C; in G minor^a. *Passagagli per lo scozzese*. *Tre arie*^a. *Bergamasca*^a. *Partite diversi di follia*. *Variationi capricciose*. *Partite di Bergamasca*. *Partite del Saltarello*. *Allemanda d'Ongheria*^a. *Canzon francese*^a. *Ricercare con la fuga in più modi*
Roberto Loreggian hpd/spin
with ^bFrancesco Ferrarini vc
Chandos Chaconne © CHAN0704
(76 minutes: DDD)

Keyboard music with a stately quality from a favourite of Roman nobility



Bernardo Pasquini cropped up two months ago in Andreas Scholl's 'Arcadia' recital (Decca, 3/04) and here he is again, this time in a recital devoted to his keyboard music. Pasquini (1637–1710) was celebrated

as a harpsichord player, much sought after by noble and royal patrons. He spent most of his working life in Rome, where for nearly 50 years he served as organist of Santa Maria in Aracoeli. He was a friend and colleague of Corelli; along with Alessandro Scarlatti, they were admitted to the Accademia Arcadia on the same day.

Whereas the painting by Andrea Pozzo in the *New Grove* dictionary shows Pasquini relaxing at the keyboard in his turban, the face in the unattributed portrait reproduced in the CD booklet is solemn, pompous even, crowned by a Charles II wig. Indeed, there is much stateliness in this music: about half of the pieces are in variation form. A typical example is the *Passagagli* in C – 16 variations on a simple four-bar phrase. The *Variationi capricciose* in the same key, on the other hand, is a little suite including ■ *Corrente* and a *Sarabanda*. As the titles indicate, the dance element is featured in the sets of variations based on the *bergamasca* and the *saltarello*.

The longest piece, the *Ricercare con la fuga in più modi*, shows the composer's skill in old-fashioned counterpoint. Pasquini never modulates from the home key (C again), but holds the listener's interest by varying the

time signatures and introducing the occasional chromatic phrase.

The excellent Roberto Loreggian brings an attractive improvisatory quality to his playing, starting some pieces with a flourish of his own and employing *rubato* here and there. The trills in the inner parts of the 'cuckoo' *Toccata* hold no terrors for him, though by the end you might well want to strangle the bird. He is joined in a didactic sonata for figured bass by cellist Francesco Ferrarini, who plays with splendid vigour; I couldn't quite believe in the *pizzicato* last movement. This is well worth investigating, but not perhaps not the whole CD at one sitting.

Richard Lawrence

SCHUMANN

N

Kinderszenen, Op 15. *Fantasie in C*, Op 17. *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, Op 26
John Lill pf

Classics for Pleasure © 585899-2
(76 minutes: DDD); Vivante © GREENPRO4001/2

Fantasie in C – selected comparisons:
Hamelin (5/01) (HYPER) CDA67166
Fiorentino (APR) APR5560
Richter (PHIL) 456 952-2PM2

The passing of time has not dulled Lill's pianistic acumen – or attack



This, surprisingly, is John Lill's first recording of any of Schumann's solo piano works. I wish I could give him the generous 60th birthday present he deserves by recommending wholeheartedly his latest endeavour, but the fact is that these are fine, well-prepared performances that fall short of the greatest.

What distinguishes Lill's playing is his scrupulous attention to the smallest notational detail (though not always dynamics and tempi). Admirable as this is, it also tends to inform the delivery with a certain literalness that others transcend, epitomised in the opening page of the great *Fantasie*. Compare Lill with the frankly more imaginative responses of Horowitz, Hamelin, Fiorentino and Katchen. The *March* is adroitly handled and strongly characterised by

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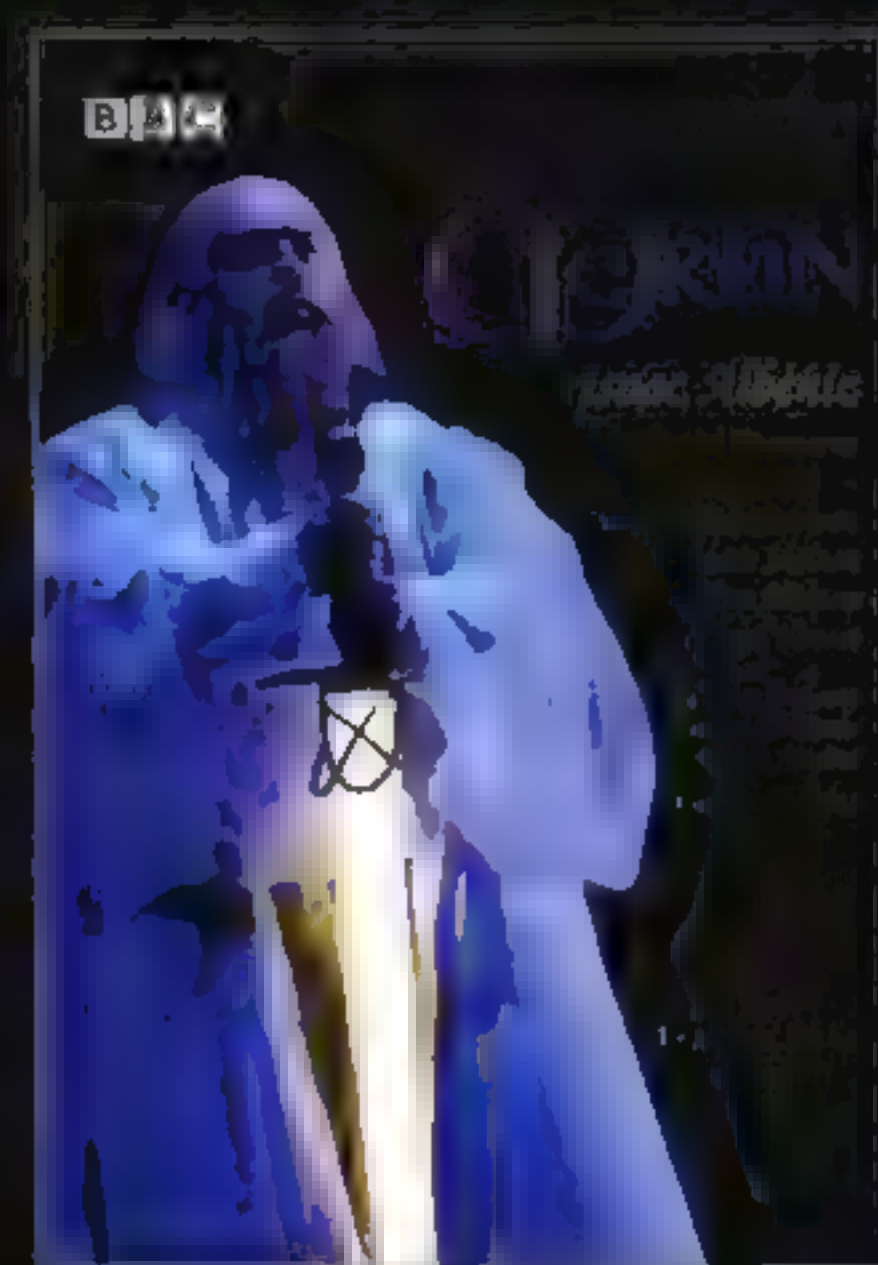
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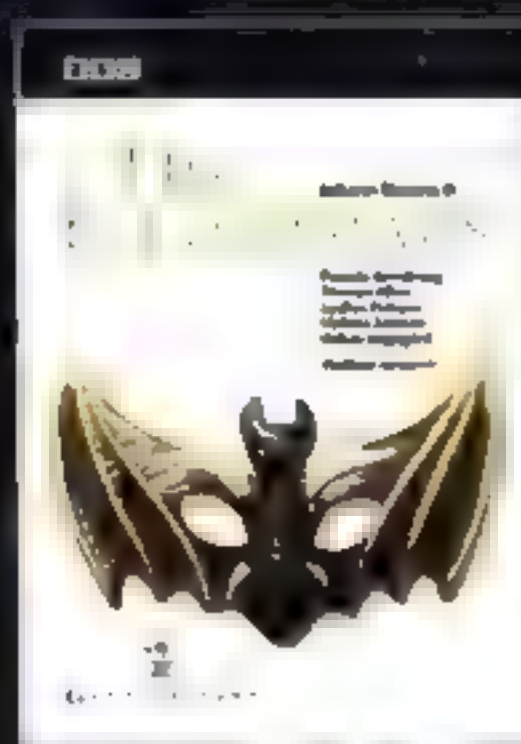


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Lill, but I do think he over-eggs the conception of an ever slower tempo for the course of the finale. Richter takes the same view but is more persuasive and over two minutes faster.

Throughout, the upper half of the piano, when played above *forte* becomes insistently hard toned, never more so than in that boringly repetitive opening theme of 'The Carnival Jest' and in its Intermezzo. Hard to say if this is Lill, the piano (Steinway), recording engineer (Tony Faulkner) or a combination of all three, but it is not a sound that always draws you in. This is not true, however, in the gentler pages of *Kinderszenen* which also conjures the best playing on the disc. Lill's simplicity and directness is spot on: 'Von Fremden Ländern un Menschen' and 'Träumerei' are particularly touching.

The recording is also issued on LP (by Vivante), though I have not had the opportunity to hear this.

Jeremy Nicholas

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Baigneuses au soleil (Souvenirs de Banyuls-sur-mer). En Languedoc. Le Chant de la terre. Les Naiades et le faune indiscret

(Danse nocturne)

Izumi Tateno pf

Warner Classics Apex © 2564 60625-2

(73 minutes: DDD)

From Finlandia 8573 87181-2, recorded 2001

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Cerdaña. En Languedoc

Jordi Masó pf

Naxos © 8 555855 (68 minutes: DDD)

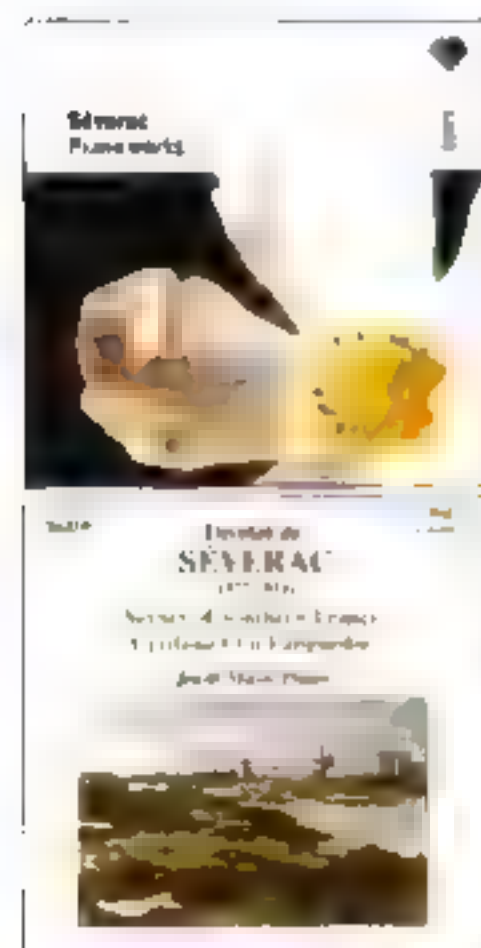
Cerdaña: Les muletiers – selected comparison:

Selva (MALI) CDRG177

Baigneuses, Cerdaña, Les Naiades – selected comparison:

Eidi (OGAM) 4880192

Music for the nose as much as for the ear



Debussy as usual put his finger on it, asking a mutual friend to tell Déodat de Séverac that his music 'smells good'. It does indeed generate fumes aplenty, but we would be wrong, I think, to assume that was all it contains. Séverac believed passionately that the soul of French music could be saved from the narrow academicism that Paris too often fostered by turning to its folk music: and not so much to the

actual tunes, as to its atmosphere, its spirituality and especially to its richness of ornament.

This ornamentation is so pervasive that it ends up seeming a necessary part of the structure. It is interesting to hear Izumi Tateno's performance of the early *Le Chant de la terre*, completed in 1900, partly because it is not otherwise available on disc but also because of its relative plainness. The folk influence is audible, but there's nothing here to mark the work out as being by Séverac rather than a number of other countryside-oriented pupils of the Schola Cantorum. With *En Languedoc* though, finished in 1904, decoration and the composer's individual voice come into their own. Tateno's playing is brighter in tone and in general subtler in its phrasing and in its management of textural planes than that of Jordi Masó, who tends to

phrase rather lumpishly. However, in 'A cheval' he does gallop with gusto and has the fingers to deal with the tricky figurations. Tateno is less vivid here – but then Japan is not horse country.

The suite *Cerdaña*, completed in 1911, is richer still in ornament and includes what is probably Séverac's most powerful piece, 'Les muletiers devant le Christ de Livia'. Again, Masó never really gets the music to lift off (he is not helped by a dull recording). He responds best to 'Les muletiers', but cannot match the breadth and spirituality of Blanche Selva, Séverac's piano teacher, in her recording from the late 1920s. In general Billy Eidi's more dramatic and colourful reading of the suite is to be preferred. In the two single pieces, *Baigneuses au soleil* and *Les Naiades et le faune indiscret*, both Tateno and Eidi find the tone of rustic never-neverlands. This may not be great music. But on a dull English February day its smell is wonderfully enticing and invigorating.

Roger Nichols

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Organ Symphonies, Op 13 –

No 1 in C minor; No 2 in D

Joseph Nolan org

ASV © CDDCA1165 (72 minutes: DDD)

Played on the organ of the Metropolitan Cathedral, Liverpool

Selected comparison:

Pincemaille (6/01) (SOLS) SOCD181/5

A spectacular organ overwhelms both player and works



ASV's Widor series seems a very piecemeal affair, previously having made use of three British organists (Jane Parker-Smith, David M Patrick and Jeremy Filsell), two English cathedral organs and a French one (Coventry, Liverpool Metropolitan and St Eustache, Paris). With this fourth volume we are introduced to a new British organist but we return to Liverpool's glorious Walker, which is, perhaps, a bit of a shame since in my review of its previous appearance (A/01) I suggested it could 'never be accused of providing a clearly defined aural picture'. That remains the case here, although, reprehensibly, ASV provides no details of the recording's engineer, producer or date.

The trouble is that Joseph Nolan keeps the instrument too much under wraps. The 'sturdy theme' promised in the booklet-notes as opening the First Symphony sounds very insipid, and Widor's *forte* markings often come out as *piano*. When Nolan does pull all the stops out he seems quite over-awed by the noise, and his playing becomes self-conscious and awkward. As a result we have the most laborious 'Marche Pontificale' imaginable (8'37" against, to cite the opposite extreme, Wayne Marshall on HMV at 6'35").

In fairness Nolan has drawn the short straw with these two symphonies, Widor's least attractive. But while competition is thin on the ground, I could not recommend this disc even as a point of reference. For that, Pierre Pincemaille on genuine Cavaillé-Coll instruments remains unbeatable (he, too, uses Widor's revised version of the First with its altered second movement, although, unlike Nolan, he reverts to Widor's original for the Second with its captivating *Scherzo*). He offers both interpretative and communicative authority.

Marc Rochester

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'O lieb, so lang du lieben kannst', S541 No 3

Schubert Fantasy in C, 'Wandererfantasie',

D760 Schumann Theme and Variations on

the name 'Abegg', Op 1. Kinderszenen,

Op 15 – Träumerei Tan Dun Eight

Memories in Watercolors, Op 1

Traditional Competition of the Two Horses

Lang Lang pf with Guo-ren Lang erhu

DG © 2 474 820-2GH; SACD © 474 875-2GH

(97 minutes: DDD) Two-for-the-price-of-one

Recorded live at Carnegie Hall, New York

on November 7, 2003

A high-profile début – Carnegie Hall, no less – that fails to deliver



Deutsche Grammophon continues to display an erratic recent track record when it comes to recording and promoting young, photogenic pianists. Blessed with phenomenal dexterity and an ebullient personality, Lang Lang (pronounced, I now learn, 'Lung Lung') has attracted an enormous amount of publicity, but his dreadful mauling of Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto at the first night of last year's BBC Proms and this present recital both raise the question of whether his musicianship matches his profile. The CD does at least spare us the ecstatic facial expressions which even Dirk Bogarde in *Song Without End* would have considered hammy.

The *Abegg* Variations are tossed off with glittering ease, reminding us of a particular side to Schumann's character before he realised that he was never going to match Mendelssohn and Henri Herz in the *fingerfertigkeit* stakes. In both the opening and closing movements of the amiable C major sonata by Haydn, Lang Lang pleasingly underlines the quirky, quickfire wit of the composer, even if the slow movement sags in interest. No matter. So far, so good. The remainder of this well-recorded recital, however, is very much hit and miss. I cannot believe, for instance, that Lang Lang truly enjoys Schubert's *Wanderer* Fantasy as a piece of music. The performance is accurate, dutiful, dogged and uninspired. It left me cold. By contrast, Tan Dun's *Eight Memories in Watercolors* inspire some memorably atmospheric playing with beautifully graded tones.

Nothing at all of interest happens in the Chopin Nocturne; the Liszt is simply a vehicle for Lang Lang's astonishing athleticism, and must be among the most vapid and unmusical accounts ever to be heard in Carnegie Hall; Lang Lang even outdoes Horowitz in pulling around Schumann's *Träumerei*. The same happens to *Liebesträume* and, while it was brave to include a comedy duet with his father playing the erhu (I'm all for a bit of fun at a piano recital), a Carnegie Hall solo début is perhaps not the ideal time for cabaret. I should have preferred to have heard the Sousa-Horowitz *Stars and Stripes Forever* and the J Strauss-Grunfeld *Soirée de Vienne* which concluded the programme, but these are omitted for some reason. There was room: disc 2 lasts just 29'14".

Jeremy Nicholas

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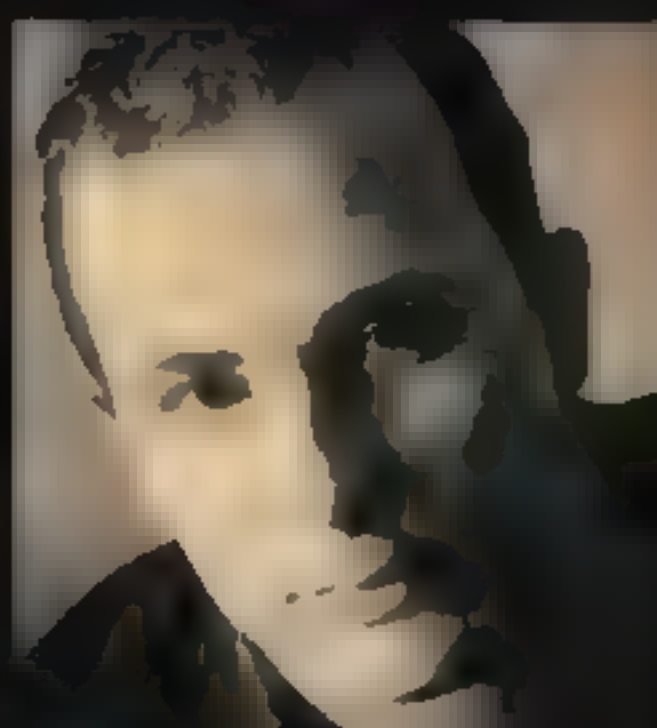
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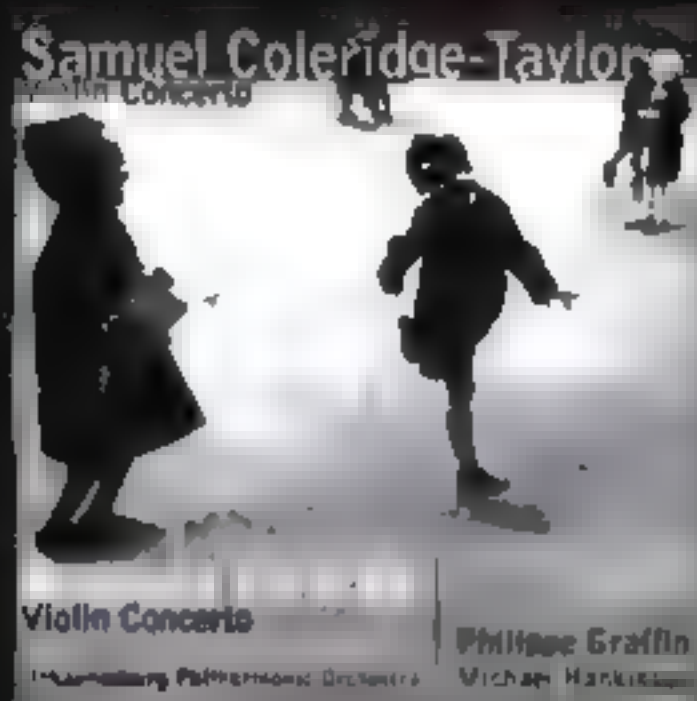
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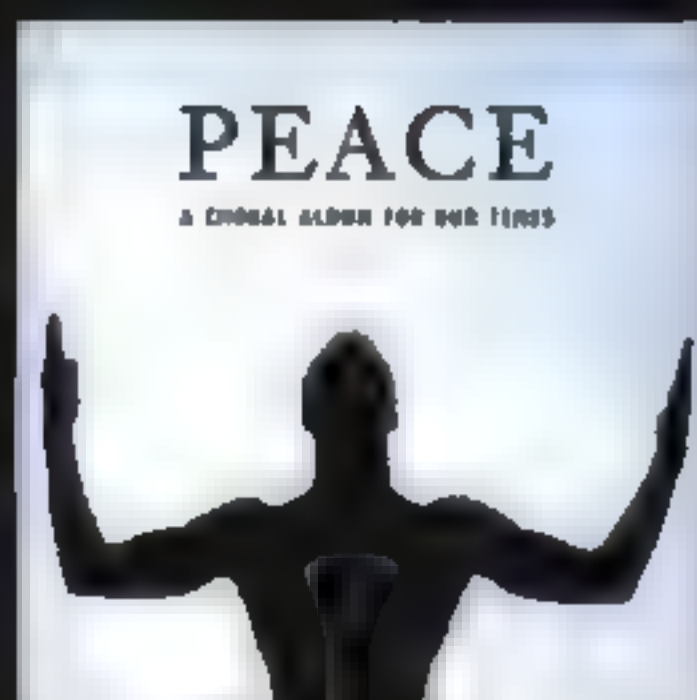


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BACH IS BEST

Lindsay Kemp travels back to the '70s and '80s for some solo Bach

There is so much Bach on the piano these days that it is nice to be reminded that there was a time when the harpsichord seemed the natural choice for his solo keyboard music. As Bach pianism continues to reach staggering standards, this 'harpsichord period' may in the future appear to have been a short one, driven by the first great boom in period-instrument performance in the 1980s and early '90s, yet no-one could seriously doubt its value. Yes, Bach is bigger than the instruments on which he is performed, but in good hands the harpsichord will always have things to offer which the piano cannot.

Of these, clarity of texture is certainly the principal, as three recent reissues ably demonstrate. Gustav Leonhardt was already an iconic figure for harpsichord devotees by the time he recorded the **English Suites** for EMI in 1984, and his is a version of these works which has had little true competition since. It is a good exemplar both of the great man's most admirable qualities and of his most frustrating. Iron intellectual grip and technical control are certainly among the former: though the performances are not quite flawless, musically speaking every note is perfectly placed and timed, as what may at first appear to be fairly strict readings gradually reveal themselves to be full of the most telling subtleties of articulation and rhythm. This really is playing to learn from. On the frustrating side, however, are a somewhat aggressively voiced instrument and an utterly maddening lack of repeats.

Another influential name of the '70s and '80s is Kenneth Gilbert, who was DG Archiv's main harpsichord man for long enough to record a substantial amount of central Bach repertoire, including the **Well-Tempered Clavier** in 1983. Gilbert uses a gentler and more comfortably recorded instrument than Leonhardt, which straightaway makes for a pleasanter listen. In any case he seems to have a greater relish for sheer sound of the harpsichord, and his elegant coaxing of a finely restored historic instrument is one of the principal joys of this set. His readings are rhythmically rather straight, but they communicate considerable love for the music nonetheless, making this recording an authoritative presence among harpsichord 48s, and a thoroughly desirable mid-price reissue (in two separate volumes) on Archiv Blue.

The booklet for Gilbert's 48 tells us that tuning duties were carried out at the sessions by Davitt Moroney, later to be a distinguished recorded interpreter of the work himself. It was, however, Moroney's **Art of Fugue**, recorded in 1985 and now reissued at mid-price, which was to win him a *Gramophone* Award. 'For Bach, fugue and canon were two of the most wonderful ways of writing beautiful music,' he writes in the booklet, and his lucid, tender and respectful performance is a perfect realisation of that ideal. Of course *The Art of Fugue* is a demanding intellectual journey, but Moroney never forgets to make it a sensual experience, too, an achievement which

is more commonly associated with multi-instrument performances of this work. This, however, is as persuasive a case for playing it on the harpsichord as you could wish for.

Now, I wonder how many former rank-and-file cellists from the Vienna Symphony Orchestra have been asked to make recordings of Bach's solo **Cello Suites**? One who was is Nikolaus Harnoncourt, who in 1965, 12 years after founding the Vienna Concentus Musicus, was the first to set them down using a Baroque cello. No doubt early listeners to the original Musical Heritage Society release would have been struck by the clean, vibratoless sound of the playing, as well as its rejection of Romantic gesture. That is not to say that it is wispy: on the contrary Harnoncourt digs deep into the strings to produce the kind of lean but muscular tone that has also been his orchestra's trademark. After a while, though, its unyielding nature begins to pall – it has at its heart a rather buzzy quality, not helped by a loveless recording – and so while these are readings

This is fairly unreconstructed stuff, full of long lines, drawn-out *crescendi* and big climaxes, and, fine though the playing is, it possibly tries too hard for attention, descending at times almost into mannerism. That Maisky re-recorded the Suites five years ago after overhearing this first one in a record shop and failing to recognise it, suggests that not even he feels much sympathy with it any more. Also in the box with it is Shlomo Mintz's technically superb 1984 account of the solo violin **Sonatas and Partitas** – 'old-fashioned' for sure, but this time (a tendency to over-emphasis apart) less intrusive in interpretation. Indeed, so sweetly and smoothly accomplished is Mintz's playing that all you need to do is sit back and enjoy his and Bach's skill. This solo Bach box is completed by the solo lute music, plus some transcriptions, performed on the guitar in the early 1980s by Göran Söllscher. Clear of texture, sensitively interpreted and neatly played, this is both a pleasure to listen to and the most stylish Bach in the set. ●



The Bach cello suites, Mk I, from Mischa Maisky (who didn't recognise the recording when he heard it in a record store) and the return of Davitt Moroney's Gramophone Award-winning *Art of Fugue*

which, as you would expect of Harnoncourt, are sharply etched and seriously thought-through, they will not come near the top of many people's list of choices. Mind you, superbudget price is maybe not too much to pay for a fascinating piece of early-music history.

More immediately appealing on its own terms is Jaap ter Linden's eloquent 1996 Harmonia Mundi accounts of the same **Cello Suites**, reissued now at 'two-for-the-price-of-one' mid-price. Linden seems a lot more comfortable with his instrument than Harnoncourt, and uses it to produce a greater variety of tone colours, all of them beguiling ones. Coupling these with a rather delicious freedom with *rubato*, he gives us a poetic reading, deeply affectionate yet never overly reverential, which seems unlikely to lose its high reputation among period-instrument versions.

There is even more freedom – and comfort with instrument – in Mischa Maisky's 1985 recording of the **Cello Suites**, which has reappeared in DG's Collectors Edition.

THE RECORDINGS

Bach English Suites

Virgin Veritas x2 ⑤ ② 562158-2 (97 minutes: DDD)

Bach Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I

Archiv Blue ④ 474 221-2ABL2 (110 minutes: DDD)

Bach Well-Tempered Clavier, Book II

Archiv Blue ④ 474 546-2ABL2 (144 minutes: DDD)

Bach The Art of Fugue

Harmonia Mundi ⑤ ② two-for-the-price-of-one HMX290 1169/70 (99 minutes: DDD)

Bach Cello Suites Harnoncourt

Apex ③ ② 2564 60816-2 (141 minutes: ADD)

Bach Cello Suites Linden

Harmonia Mundi ⑤ ② two-for-the-price-of-one HMX290 7346/7 (145 minutes: DDD)

Bach Cello Suites. Sonatas and Partitas etc

Maisky; Mintz; Söllscher
DG ⑤ ⑤ 474 641-2GB6 (465 minutes: DDD)

VOCAL

Adès in America • Landmark Machaut • Cantatas to rival Bach

Adès

N

America: A Prophecy, Op 19^b. Life Story, Op 86^a. The Fayrfax Carol^c. Fool's Rhymes, Op 5^e. The Lover in Winter^c. Brahms, Op 21^d. January Writ^f. Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin, Op 3a^g. Cardiac Arrest^h. Les Barricades mystérieuses^h

^aClaron McFadden sop ^bSusan Bickley mez
^cRobin Blaze countertenor ^dChristopher Maltman bar ^eRichard Benjafield perc ^fHugh Webb hp
^gTom Poster, ^hHuw Watkins pfs ⁱChristopher Bowers-Broadbent org ^jPolyphony / Stephen Layton; ^kComposers Ensemble; ^lCity of Birmingham Symphony Chorus and ^mOrchestra / ⁿbdh Thomas Adès

EMI © 557610-2 (60 minutes: DDD)

Texts and translations included

Vigorous and brilliant – but to what end?



Back in the late 1990s, when Thomas Adès, as part of the New York Philharmonic's 'Messages to the Millennium', was commissioned, the resulting reminder of the New World's violent colonial past was received as a tactless slap by an arrogant ingrate. In a post-September 11 world, however, lines like 'They will come from the east' and 'Their cities will fall' make *America: A Prophecy* seem, well, prophetic.

But just as it is unwise to make summary dismissals on the basis of a first hearing, we shouldn't assign too much greatness after the fact. Headlines aside, *America* remains as overwrought as it is underdeveloped. Its theme, originally a brutal depiction of the Spanish conquest of the Mayans, is so easily recontextualised because, frankly, there was little substance there to begin with. The promising facility of styles and sonorities evident in the composer's debut recording, 'Life Story' (EMI, 6/97), and the growing vibrancy of his orchestral imagination in *Asyla* result here in a one-dimensional portrait sounding like out-takes of other pieces rather than a fully conceived work.

The smaller targets, however, Adès hits with greater consistency. A set of choral works performed by Polyphony bubbles with judicious instrumental accompaniment. Both *The Lover in Winter* for countertenor and *Life Story* for soprano reveal the vocal potential later revealed in *Powder Her Face*. The most recent piece on the collection, *Brahms*, for baritone and orchestra, at least aims at the quirky humour in Alfred Brendel's poem.

By contrast, it's hard to see exactly what Adès's arrangement of *Cardiac Arrest* adds to the original tune by the 1980s band Madness other than making a clever pairing with Couperin's *Les Baricades mystérieuses*, also transcribed by Adès. Seeing those connections, however, we do gain a bit of insight into the composer's musical mind.

To supporters and detractors, Adès is postmodernism incarnate – a brilliant, bitter voice dripping with ironic detachment. His work, though shows signs of its own decay. Familiar with all styles but beholden to none, Adès is the end of the line rather than the start of something new.

Ken Smith

Bach

N

Cantatas, Volume 22 –

Cantatas from Leipzig, 1724^a

Cantatas – No 7, Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam; No 20, O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort; No 94, Was frag ich nach der Welt

Yukari Nonoshita sop Robin Blaze countertenor

Jan Kobow ten Peter Kooyi bass

Bach Collegium Japan / Masaaki Suzuki

BIS © BIS-CD1321 (73 minutes: DDD)

Texts and translations included

Cantata No 20 – selected comparison:

Herreweghe (9/03) (HARM) HMC90 1791

Cantata No 94 – selected comparisons:

Leusink (11/00) (BRIL) 99370

Koopman (ERAT) 8573 80215-2

Suzuki's admirable progress through the sacred cantatas shows no sign of flagging



This volume heralds the beginning of the most substantial and ambitious compositional exercise in Bach's career: an annual series of cantatas in which the composer planned that every Sunday in the church calendar would be identified, textually and musically, by the appropriate chorale for the season. Bach's second annual cycle – or *Jahrgang* 2 – was never completed but it contains around 40 chorale cantatas in which, most notably, the first stanza of the chorale is presented variously as an intricate fantasia on the chosen hymn, proclaimed with stirring fervour, usually by the sopranos. While Bach sought new compositional challenges here, he also knew that his boys at St Thomas's would cope better with familiar chorale-based material than the highly complex choruses which characterise the earlier cycle.

Suzuki's approach to these cantatas is not strictly chronological as has often been the case. He starts with the first piece in the cycle, the splendid *O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort* (No 20), which Bach performed on the first Sunday of Trinity (June 11, 1724) but jumps a week by missing out No 2 (with its strikingly austere *stilo antico* opening movement) and goes for No 7, and then chooses No 94 from a few weeks later. None of this has much bearing on the performances except that this formula seems to juxtapose deftly the wide range of forms used by Bach. The extended and graphic description of Christ's baptism in *Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam* (No 7), articulated by two *concertante* violin parts, is contrasted with the dazzling French overture of No 20. If the playing in the former is somewhat prosaic, Suzuki gives the majestic opening movement of *O Ewigkeit* such apt propulsion in the bass line that one only intermittently yearns for the more secularised elegance of Herreweghe.

It seems curious that two performances of No 20, released so closely, should employ the same tenor and bass soloists in Jan Kobow and Peter Kooyi. Suzuki's approach with both singers is rather more rhetorical than Herreweghe,

who tends to irradiate the music for its own sake, enhanced by the cultivated strings of Collegium Vocale. Both have something interesting to say but Suzuki connects language and music with greater depth of sentiment.

As exemplary a work is *Was frag ich nach der Welt* (No 94), a substantial cantata whose librettist clearly worked in close collaboration with Bach, ensuring that each stanza of the chorale could be presented with disarming invention. The work is as eager to provide telling dramatic imagery as it is to ruminate on the transience of life and Mammon's vanity. Bach makes instant demands on his virtuoso flute player who, judging by the number of obbligato parts from this period, was no slouch. It is a marvellous, fresh and abiding testament to Bach's increasing obsession with unified and economical means. Suzuki realises its quizzical turns and relishes the enriching set-pieces.

Pieter Jan Leusink and Ton Koopman's readings are full of character and ruddy energy (in the case of Koopman and the Amsterdammers, particularly distinguished instrumental performances) but neither can boast Robin Blaze's commentary on our deluded world, *Belotte Welt*. All told, another success chalked up for this continually impressive Bach series.

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

Bacri

N

Three Cantatas, 'Fils d'Abraham', Op 33 –

No 1, 'Vitae Abdicatio'^a; No 2, 'Coplas de Don Jorge por la muerte de su padre'^b; No 3, 'Vita et Mors'^c. Cantata No 4, 'Sonnet LXVI de Shakespeare', Op 44^d. Cantata No 5, 'Rainbow of Silence', Op 77^e. Notturmo, Op 74^f. Cinq Motets de souffrance et de consolation, Op 59^g – Ego vir videns paupertatem meam; Quare tristis es. Benedicat Israël Domino, Op 64^h. Motet No 7, 'O lux beatissima', Op 71^g.

^aSylvie Althaparro, ^bValérie Rio,
^cIsabelle Sengès mezz ^dFrançois Leleux ob
^eYves Bouillier vc ^gKea Choir; ^hHodeiertz de Tolosa Choir / ⁱEnrique Azurza;
^jCNR Bayonne-Côte-Basque Choir;
^kacdef Orchestre Regional Bayonne-Côte-Basque / Xavier Delette

L'Empreinte Digitale © 2 ED13170

(105 minutes: DDD). Texts included

A Frenchman who seems to find little hope in the world lets it show in his music

As Bach, Handel and Scarlatti are acknowledged as models for Nicolas Bacri's cantatas, it is relevant to point out that in all their choral works there is nothing to equal the sustained outpouring of misery and gloom found here. Bacri (b1961) himself confesses that a part of him believes that 'nothing's going well and everything's hopeless': on the evidence of this two-disc set, I couldn't agree more.

There is a solitary movement marked *giocoso* – in Cantata No 3 – and for the first 30 seconds or so of this 3'57" movement we do get a little bit of



chirpy woodwind, but gloom and despondency quickly return and by 1'30" we are back to the slow, agonisingly tragic mood which permeates everything here. There are some passages which would be highly effective in a less oppressive context; the opening of Cantata No 1 with its profound duet between mezzo-soprano and oboe, the passionate outburst in the middle of the first part of Cantata 5 (tracks 4-6) with its incisive percussion and frantic orchestral *fughetta* and the highly atmospheric *Quare tristis es* for unaccompanied chorus.

Bacri's obvious penchant for the sombre tones of the mezzo-soprano voice and oboe is persuasively supported by all three mezzos here as well as by oboist François Leleux, who reveals a wonderful depth of tone in the haunting Notturmo for oboe and strings. It is only unfortunate that by the time the choir is called upon to produce anything slightly animated – the opening chorus of the unaccompanied *Benedicat Israël Domino* – they seem to have been so overwhelmed by the prevailing mood that their fire has been almost terminally extinguished. **Marc Rochester**

BERLIOZ

'La Révolution grecque' – Choral Works
Le Ballet des ombres, Op 2^d. Chant Sacré,
Op 2 No 6 (2 versions)^{a/f/ad}. Chant guerrier,
Op 2 No 3^{acd}. Chanson à boire, Op 2 No 5^{ad}.
Le Cinq mai, chant sur la mort de Napoléon,
Op 6^{cf}. La Mort d'Orphée^{af}. Scène héroïque
(La Révolution grecque)^{bcf}. Sara la baigneuse,
Op 11^f. Tantum ergo^e. Tristia, Op 18^f.
Veni creator. Chants des chemins de fer, Op 19
No 3^{af}. Hymne pour la consécration du
nouveau tabernacle^d

^aRolando Villazón *ten* ^bNicolas Rivenq *bar*

^cLaurent Naouri *bass* ^dDavid Bismuth *pf*

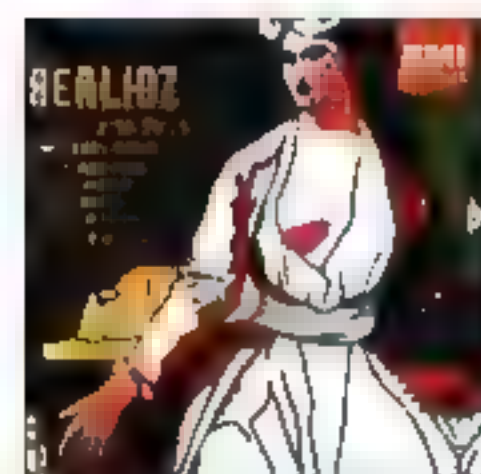
^eFrank Villars *harm* Les Éléments;

^fOrchestre National du Capitole de
Toulouse / Michel Plasson

EMI © 2 557499-2 (123 minutes: DDD)

Texts and translations included

Berlioz the Showman – an exciting choral
collection designed for public display



The pieces on these discs typify rather neatly two of Berlioz's chief characteristics: his capacity to perplex, astound and deafen the multitudes, and his equal ability to touch the inner imagination of the listener with the lightest of hands. The two aspects correspond roughly to the public and private Berlioz.

The public Berlioz gets a good airing here. The earliest piece is the *Scène Héroïque*, known as *La Révolution grecque*, which he wrote at the end of 1825, around his 22nd birthday. As Hugh Macdonald, general editor of *The New Berlioz Edition* says, it looks back to the revolutionary choruses of the 1790s with its cries of 'victoire' and 'triomphe' and this may be one reason why, after one performance in 1828, Berlioz claimed to have destroyed it – a claim he also made for the *Messe solennelle* written in 1824, but which has also survived. *La Révolution* is nothing like so interesting as the Mass, either for what it is or for what it portends, but there are the odd characteristic touches, such as the sudden emergence of soft, pliant material out of rumbustious noise. The energy, too, is of a voltage way above the

ordinary for 1820s France, and Michel Plasson and his forces respond well. But unlike the Mass, this work lacks distinctive melodic material, even if the central 'Prière' has some lovely sounds.

Of the remaining public pieces, the *Chant des chemins de fer* is highly entertaining and wonderfully fit for its purpose – the inauguration of the Paris-Lille railway line in 1846. Writing the piece took Berlioz either three whole nights, or three hours (voice parts) and one night (instrumentation), depending on which version you like to believe. Certainly one doesn't get the impression he agonised over it, and its directness is very much part of its charm – although what I take to be the odd encouraging vocals from the chorus master don't add anything of value. The *Chanson à boire* is fun, the *Chant guerrier* downright weird, with rhythms and phrasing that barely make sense today. Much the finest work of all is *Le Cinq mai*, written in 1835 to commemorate the death of Napoleon. Greeks, booze and railways were one thing, the Emperor quite another, and Berlioz's admiration is reflected in the music's brooding intensity. He conducted it with regular success in his concerts despite what he called the 'abominable' literary quality of the verse, and despite what one sour reviewer referred to as the novel absence of bass drum and ophicleides.

The excellent *Chant sacré* comes somewhere between being wholly public and wholly private. And it may be a problem for critics who, overtaxed by the bicentenary celebrations, have claimed Berlioz was unable to write a good tune. Most of the private pieces are familiar enough, and personally I can never hear *Sara la baigneuse* too often (soft porn transmuted into high art), while *Le ballet des ombres* (incidentally, one of Henri Dutilleul's favourite pieces) creates a world unlike any other.

The choir Les Éléments sing with vigour and precision and the sopranos make a lovely sound. Plaudits, too, to David Bismuth for some virtuoso piano playing. As so often, I feel the chorus is placed too far from the microphone, and whereas in the pieces with piano this is not a problem, against the orchestra many of the words are really hard to catch. The three male soloists are placed further forward and all do well, even if Nicolas Rivenq's voice is a little dry at climaxes. Laurent Naouri is superb, Rolando Villazón exciting, with only very occasional tuning trouble. All in all, these discs, giving us over an hour of Berlioz not available elsewhere in the catalogue, are very welcome. **Roger Nichols**

HANDEL

Acis and Galatea, HWV49b

Suzie LeBlanc *sop* Mark Blecke *ten*

Marc Molomot *ten* Nathaniel Watson *bass*

Les Boréades / Eric Milnes

ATMA Classique © ACD22302 (94 minutes: DDD)

A few flaws, but closer in spirit to
Handel's conception than many

Handel's earliest English masterpiece was created for the Duke of Chandos in 1718, and probably first performed at the Duke's estate, Cannons, using a small band with single instruments on each part. That approach is adopted here by the Canadian ensemble Les Boréades, whose director Eric Milnes expertly judges how far to push or relax Handel's characteristic instrumental writing.

The impressive band use fruity oboes and vivacious strings to colourfully evoke both pastoral tenderness and melodrama. Suzie LeBlanc's Galatea conjures a captivating aura of gentle magic in 'Heart of soft delight', and



Nathaniel Watson is superb as the pantomime villain Polyphemus. Mark Blecke (Acis) and Marc Molomot (Damon) produce neat performances, although neither demonstrates the natural tone and clarity of their finest predecessors on disc. The singers blend superbly in the chorus: the Purcellian phrase that concludes 'Mourn, all ye muses' is extraordinarily moving and exquisitely balanced, while their account of 'Wretched lovers' is arguably the best on disc, with the madrigal-like quality of Handel's counterpoint impressively contrasted with fiery dramatic declamations.

I would have appreciated less restlessness from the continuo during its most prominent moments. For instance, Damon's 'Consider, fond shepherd' is interpreted here with an abrupt French style in the accompaniment, but a smoother lyrical delivery of the cello line would have been more appropriate to both its dramatic context and musical content. The mock-military nature of 'Love sounds the alarm' seems ridiculous with the addition of recorders, and there is no adequate reason for recorders to be included in music where Handel did not indicate them: Handel's oboists probably doubled as his recorder players, thus his careful avoidance of mixing both instruments in any one number. Organ continuo, while commonplace nowadays and undeniably attractive when used judiciously, is also similarly unhistorical.

Eric Milnes includes the choral conclusion to 'Happy we' that Handel composed more than 20 years later for a London revival. Furthermore, Handel lovers must continue to wait for a rigorously accurate 'Cannons' version that employs a third tenor in the role of Coridon because Milnes follows customary current practice by assigning the first tenor chorus part to an otherwise superfluous countertenor, with Coridon's 'Would you gain the tender creature' nonsensically assigned to Damon. Despite such problems, the overall performance is closer to the spirit of Handel's original Cannons conception than most other recordings of this standard, and I warmly recommended it. **David Vickers**

HANDEL

Ode for St Cecilia's Day, HWV76

Dorothee Miels *sop* Mark Wilde *ten*

Alsfeld Vocal Ensemble; Concerto Polacco

/ Wolfgang Helbich

Naxos © 8 554752 (49 minutes: DDD)

Select comparison:

Pinnock (1/87) (ARCH) 419 220-2AH

A good bargain version of Handel's ode
but it doesn't match up to the opposition



Although much of it may be 'borrowed' from other composers, as the notes diligently point out, Handel's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* still strikes me as one of his most profoundly original works, and one that perfectly captures the delectable extravagance of Dryden's verse. I'm afraid I always enjoy it hugely, however indifferent the performance. This one is very competent but not perhaps wholly idiomatic. I don't feel that the vein of English eccentricity in it is quite comfortably handled by the Concerto Polacco or Wolfgang Helbich, vivid though some of their playing is;

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Philips	462 7822	Beethoven Piano Concs 1 & 4	Brendel;Rattle	Decca	460 7812	Rossini	Stabat Mater	Fritolli;Chailly
Philips	462 7832	Beethoven Piano Concs 2 & 3	Brendel;Rattle	UCJ	472 6222	Rutter	The Collection...	Cambridge Singers
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Philips	438 1492	Faure Requiem	ORR;Gardiner	Philips	462 9052	Tchaikovsky	Symphony No.5	VPO;Gergiev
Decca	452 8022	Fleming Sings Mozart	Mackerras	DG	445 2942	Terfel	An Die Musik	Martineau
Decca	455 2942	Fleming Schubert Lieder		DG	453 4802	Terfel	Famous Handel Arias	
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Decca	460 5672	Fleming I Want Magic...		DG	449 1902	Terfel	Impressions	
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Decca	475 0112	Jansen Violin Favourites						
Decca	444 4092	Kreislser The Kreislser Album...	Bell					
DG	439 9112	Lehar Merry Widow	Studer;Gardiner					
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there are some stilted rhythms here and there, some exaggerated effects, and a kind of reverent tone sometimes creeps in.

Mark Wilde, the tenor soloist, strikes me as a little bland in manner, but he is very assured; Dorothee Miels is a bright and clear soprano, well suited to the music, especially that incomparably beautiful number 'What passion cannot music raise and quell' – her voice has the right diamantine glow, and if the solo cellist isn't ideally poetic on his 'chorded shell' he does place the accompanying music neatly and artfully. The choral singing is rather sustained in style, but quite efficient, even if it is sometimes clear they are not using their native tongue. The organ elaboration in the climactic solo is handled sensibly and musically. In sum, this is a very acceptable performance, but the fine Pinnock version, with Felicity Lott and Anthony Rolfe Johnson, would take a lot of beating.

Stanley Sadie

HAWKINS

'Voices from the Sea'

Voices from the Sea^a. Variations^b. Waiting: Tango^c. Brief Encounters^d. Worlds Apart^e. Shadows^f. Disturbed Nights^g. Gestures^h. Quietusⁱ

^aMartyn Hill *ten* ^dNancy Ruffer *fl*
^eChristopher O'Neal *ob* ^{bef}Kathron Sturrock
^{pf}Siân Philipps *vn* thYuko Inoue, ^{cdhi}Paul
Silverthorne *vas* ⁱGemma Rosefield *vc*
^{cel}Duncan McTier *db* ^aDivertimenti String
Orchestra / Antony Pay

Meridian © CDE84496 (71 minutes: DDD)

^aRecorded live at St John's, Smith Square, London on April 3, 1985. Texts included

A debut release after 19 years: a powerful sea song-cycle from a talented Briton



John Hawkins (born in 1949 and a student of Malcolm Williamson and Elisabeth Lutyens) is a name new to me and, I suspect, to most readers. But it is a name to remember. His cycle *Voices from the Sea* (for tenor and string orchestra) is in the great tradition of English sea songs, yet it is a far cry from Stanford – exchanging shanty-like optimism for an awareness of the sea's menace, the constant hazards of a seaman's existence and his longing for home.

The authors of the six poems on which the cycle is based are all professional seamen, including a Second Engineer wondering 'what brought me here' and a ship's musician looking out from the crow's-nest. The powerful central climax of the cycle comes with the lighthouse keeper's vision of a raft carrying a dead mariner, crunching against the rocks; and the rating's memory of a crewman who 'laughed in the wind', just before he was crushed by a falling derrick.

These evocative settings show that Hawkins has the now rare gift of being able to write vocal lines grateful to the voice, where leaping intervals slip naturally and movingly into the lyrical sequence – especially when sung with such sensitivity and variety of vocal colour as here by Martyn Hill. The orchestra, directed by Antony Pay, contribute economical yet poignant scene-setting preludes and interludes: the vibrant questioning and passionate string writing of the opening song reminded me of the Britten of *Peter Grimes*.

The eight piano Variations which follow might seem at first slightly intangible, but reveal their secrets with familiarity, including a 'sad waltz' and an unusual passacaglia. The other works

explore new colour combinations from familiar instruments, while sharing the song-cycle's economy of utterance. The nagging, mysterious *Waiting: Tango* uses a viola and double bass, as does the engaging *Shadows*, inspired by a poem by Ursula Vaughan Williams, *Ainsi le bon temps*. The three *Brief Encounters* of flute and viola move from coquettish flirtation to friendly intercourse, and finally enthusiastic integration.

Disturbed nights, is a 'lullaby' for oboe with complex variations, as the baby sabotages all efforts of his parents to get back to sleep! The elusive but melancholy *Quietus* is a vignette for string trio written in memory of the wife of the viola player Paul Silverthorne. All the solo playing is first-class and the recording is excellent, making a highly enticing debut CD for Hawkins.

Ivan March

HAYDN

The Seasons (sung in English)

Elsie Morison *sop* Alexander Young *ten*
Michael Langdon *bass* Beecham Choral
Society; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra /
Sir Thomas Beecham

Somm © 2 SOMM-BEECHAM16-2

(144 minutes: ADD). Text included

From HMV ASD282/4 (1/60)

Plenty of points to argue over, but this glowing performance will win hearts



Though there are points for academics and others to criticise in this characterful reading of Haydn's last oratorio, this is a version to recommend to anyone who has ever responded to the charm and vivacity of Beecham in Haydn. It was mainly recorded in November 1956, but Beecham – who liked to record when the mood took him – did not get round to completing it until April 1958. It is a performance which glows from beginning to end, and I am delighted that, in default of EMI taking up the challenge, Somm has issued it on CD in excellent transfers.

First the detailed reservations. Few, I imagine, will worry over much about the way Beecham has discreetly orchestrated the relatively brief passages of recitative where Haydn has simply specified keyboard accompaniment: after all, most of the recitative is already orchestrated. More serious, though not too damaging, is the cut of 43 bars towards the end of the orchestral introduction. Then, characteristically, Beecham retouches the detailed scoring to heighten the colourful imagery of the text.

So the tolling of the curfew bell in the final chorus of 'Summer' (disc 1, track 22, 2'46"), which Haydn illustrates on the horn, finds Beecham adding a real bell; at the end of 'Autumn' he enhances the stamp of the rustic dance with cymbal-strokes. None of this comes near to the radical nature of the reorchestration he sanctioned in his last recording of Handel's *Messiah*, but there, too, he was intent on presenting the score as vividly as possible. That accords with his decision to record the work in English, using a translation by Dennis Arundell. This may have its infelicities, but it works much better than the traditional translation based on the original poem of James Thomson, from which Baron von Swieten drew his German text.

The number which illustrates the Beecham magic at its most compelling is Simon's first aria in the opening section, 'Spring', here translated as 'Now daily runs the farmer's boy': Beecham has the bassoon vividly illustrating the running boy

with bouncing rhythms and staccato semi-quavers. Michael Langdon is a firm bass soloist, never allowing an intrusive aspirate in his running semiquavers. Elsie Morison is in ravishing form, headily pure in every register, and the tenor, Alexander Young, is equally clear, fresh and true. Though the chorus cannot quite match latterday groups in polish or precision, and the recording balance makes them less clear than they might be, the vigour of the singing is never in doubt, with the RPO soloists relishing Beecham's rhythmic and melodic nuances.

Edward Greenfield

HOLTEN

Rain and Rush and Rosebush^a. First Snow.

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. In nomine.

A Time for Everything

^aCatherine Bott *sop* BBC Singers / Bo Holten

Decapo © 8 224214 (63 minutes: DDD)

Texts included

A splendid, magnificently sung disc boasting lush, richly chromatic writing



It's good to see that Bo Holten's choral music has merited an entire disc to itself, and since he has been guest-conducting the BBC Singers since 1991 it is appropriate that they should be the elected choir for the occasion. Holten's range is perhaps bewilderingly vast – he can justifiably be described as eclectic (the booklet-notes make rather a point of his unconventional aesthetic stance both as composer and performer) – but it is always accomplished.

Lushly chromatic writing characterises the Blake cycle *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, which Holten describes as his 'most substantial and ambitious *a cappella* work'. 'The Sick Rose' is particularly successful, and it is good that he is not afraid to set such well-known texts. 'The Tyger' seems to me less so in that it gives everything away at once (its dense textures make for an interesting comparison with Tavener's version), but there are many delights in the rest of the cycle, from the arresting simplicity of the 'Cradle Song', whose solo is affectingly done by Micaela Haslam, to the unexpected quotations from earlier music in 'Spring' and 'Night'.

First Snow comprises two landscapes by the Icelandic poet Stephan G Stephanson, which summon rugged music from Holten, but *A Time for Everything* (setting Ecclesiastes) and *Rain and Rush and Rosebush*, to words by Hans Christian Andersen, are both more immediately attractive and, I think, more substantial. The latter also features some stunning stratospheric work by Catherine Bott. *In Nomine* is exactly the thing to finish with, however. It's a *tour de force*, a BBC Singers commission setting the *In nomine* chant in manifold canons for 24 voices, the section from Taverner's *Missa Gloria tibi Trinitas* appearing from time to time sung by a semi-chorus, ever more distant. A shining conclusion to a splendid, magnificently sung disc.

Ivan Moody

HUMMEL

Missa solennis in C. Te Deum

Patricia Wright *sop* Zam McKendree-

Wright *contr* Patrick Power *ten* David

Griffiths *bar* Tower Voices New Zealand;

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra /

Uwe Grodd

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Schoenberg Choir; Concentus Musicus
Wien / Nikolaus Harnoncourt

Deutsche Harmonia Mundi © 2 82876 58340-2
(107 minutes: DDD)

Recorded live at the Musikvereinssaal, Vienna
on March 26-30, 2003

Text and translations included

Selected comparisons:

Harnoncourt (4/87R) (TELD) 2292-42682-2

Gardiner (4/97) (ARCH) 449 217-2AH2

Hengelbrock (3/03) (DHM) 05472 77537-2



Nikolaus Harnoncourt's previous recording of *The Creation* is 18 years old and is beginning to show its age. The new version is better in balance and clearer in definition. The chorus (now as then the excellent Arnold Schoenberg Choir) is given

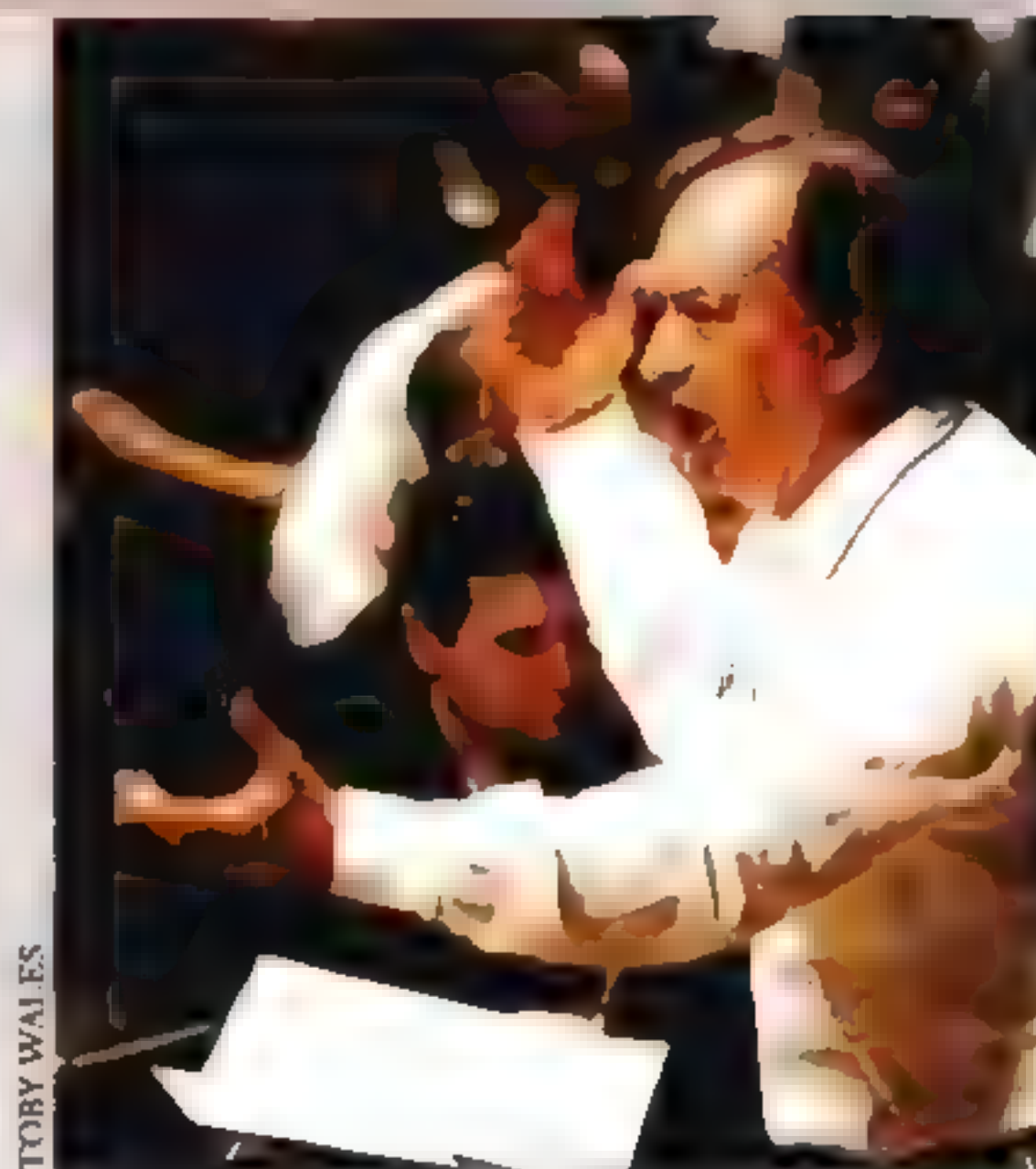
more presence, the orchestral instruments are more sharply differentiated. The piano continuo, a notable feature of the original, has more prominence and joins more freely in the creative spirit of the whole. Harnoncourt's way with the work has not changed greatly – it is, as it was, scrupulously attentive to detail but guided also by an eye for the pictorial imagination of the

score and a deep feeling for its sense of wonder and reverence. Still, if one particular element has to be identified as favouring this new recording over its predecessor I would point to the soloists. The previous trio did good work – indeed, Hilary Finch reviewing in April 1987 found them to be a decisive asset – but the new one is better.

All three singers are of the younger generation, and all are rapidly developing artists. Dorothea Röschmann sings with a new authority here. Thus far she has sung sweetly and well, if perhaps discreetly and with a certain reticence of distinctive character and commitment. Here she seems to be remembering that, though both represent the state of innocence, Gabriel is an archangel and Eve the mother of mankind. Michael Schade, who sang Uriel in the Gardiner recording of 1995, is no longer the light tenor he was and has gained the confidence and insight to give full dramatic life to his singing.

The greatest difference comes with the replacement of Robert Holl by Christian Gerhaher. Holl, with his deeper, fuller voice, was a majestic Raphael, noble in manner, a worthy spokesman for the Creator. Gerhaher, lighter in weight and without a bass admixture in his baritone, suggests a more interesting kind of divinity: a being of intelligence, energy and wit. More Haydn-esque in fact. Also more even in the production of his voice, with its tones more clearly defined.

In 1986 Harnoncourt's principal rivals on record were Karajan, Marriner and Kuijken. Since then there have arrived a fine version under Rilling, the always vital and interesting



Nikolaus Harnoncourt: 'the broader view prevails'

Gardiner and a long wished-for version in English by Rattle. There is also Thomas Hengelbrock's performance with his admirable Balthasar-Neumann Choir and Ensemble for DHM: an invigorating experience (the fast choruses, particularly: 'Vollendet', 'Gesegnet', 'Singt dem Herren' and so forth), and for a time I thought it might claim precedence. On returning to Harnoncourt, the broader view prevails: less deliberately driven, this is more calmly responsive to rhythm, richer in colour – and wisdom.

John Steane

A richly sung and played complement to the Gramophone Award-winning Masses



Richard Hickox's splendid, Gramophone Award-winning Chandos issue of two of Hummel's Masses (12/02) has already alerted us to the vigour and imagination of his choral writing, with none of the

note-spinning that occasionally mars his keyboard writing. This, the longest of Hummel's five Masses is another invigorating example, coupled with an electrifying setting of the *Te Deum*. Both were written in 1806 and feature martial reminders that this was the period of the Napoleonic Wars.

The *Te Deum* opens with a rousing march, and with one or two relaxed passages for contrast – illustrating this long and varied prayer-text – continues in a single span. It ends with a brisk and triumphant *fugato*, quite different from the sombre close most often heard in Anglican settings of Cranmer's 'Let me never be confounded'. But what a delight it is, the more so when Uwe Grodd draws such an exhilarating performance from his forces.

The performance of the Mass is equally successful. Unlike Haydn's late Masses and the four other Masses which Hummel wrote for Prince Nicolas Esterhazy, this was not composed for the name-day of the Princess, but for the wedding of their daughter, Princess Leopoldina, an even grander occasion. The grandeur of the writing is established in the slow introduction to the *Kyrie*, leading to a brisk main *Allegro* (following Haydn's lively practice in *Kyries*) in a rhythmic triple time.

The martial flavour of the writing is evident from the *Gloria*'s opening fanfares and continues

into the *Credo*, until a sharp change of key to a warm A major brings a relaxed and lyrical setting of 'Et incarnatus', followed by the clashing discords of the 'Crucifixus'. 'Et resurrexit' restores the military mood. One moment to relish comes after the last of the calls of 'Credo' on 'Et vitam venturi' (track 4, 9'09") with two rising scale passages clearly intended to send you up to Heaven in their exhilaration.

Brodd opts to use his (admirable) soloists throughout the *Benedictus*, even though the autograph suggests otherwise. It works very well with imitative writing for the soloists set against the four-square tread of the orchestra. With the *Agnus Dei* Hummel at last writes a meditative movement, slow and hushed, which develops into chromatic writing in a minor key, before the 'Dona nobis pacem', as in Haydn's masses, brings a joyful close. Grodd inspires vigorous playing and singing from his forces, who are freshly and cleanly recorded.

Edward Greenfield

MACHAUT

Motets

De souspirant cuer, M2. Fine Amour, qui me vint navrer, M3. Puis que la douce rousée, M4. Qui plus aime, M5. Lasse! Je suis en aventure, M7. Ha! Fortune, M8. O livoris feritas, M9. Helas! Oú sera pris confors, M10. Fins cuers dous. Eins que ma dame d'onnur, M13. Faus Samblant m'a deceü, M14. Se j'aim mon loyal ami, M16. Bone pastor, M18. Diligenter inquiramus, M19. Biauté parée de valour, M20. Veni creator spiritus, M21. Plange, regni respublica, M22. Inviolata genitrix, M23

The Hilliard Ensemble (David Gould, David James *countertens* Rogers Covey-Crump, Steven Harrold *tens* Gordon Jones *bar*)

ECM New Series © 472 402-2 (63 minutes: DDD)
Texts and translations included

Most of Machaut's motets, in his own order, performed with marvellous refinement by musicians of now incomparable experience



This is a landmark recording and a courageous venture. It is probably the first devoted to Machaut's motets, containing no fewer than 18 of the 23 that survive. It is certainly the first to present them in

the order in which Machaut himself presented them in his own manuscripts. And the performances are of a truly mandarin refinement. Here are The Hilliard Ensemble with goodness knows how many combined years of experience performing this kind of music in public; they are not just on the top of their form but also constantly showing the fruits of that experience.

The results of that refinement may surprise some listeners. Tempi tend to be rather slower than on earlier recordings: it is as though they feel no need for lily-gilding, no need to apologise for the music, where earlier performances injected possibly gratuitous energy into Machaut's lines. Dissonances are often made to disappear almost without trace, which will be disappointing to those who thought the clashes to be the very lifeblood of Machaut's music. (And it must be absolutely clear that this was an informed decision by The Hilliards, many of whom have performed this music with other groups over the years.) Diction tends to be clearer than in some recent recordings, and – perhaps most surprising of all – they refrain from adopting current views on the early French pronunciation of Latin. These are all features that could make some listeners find it

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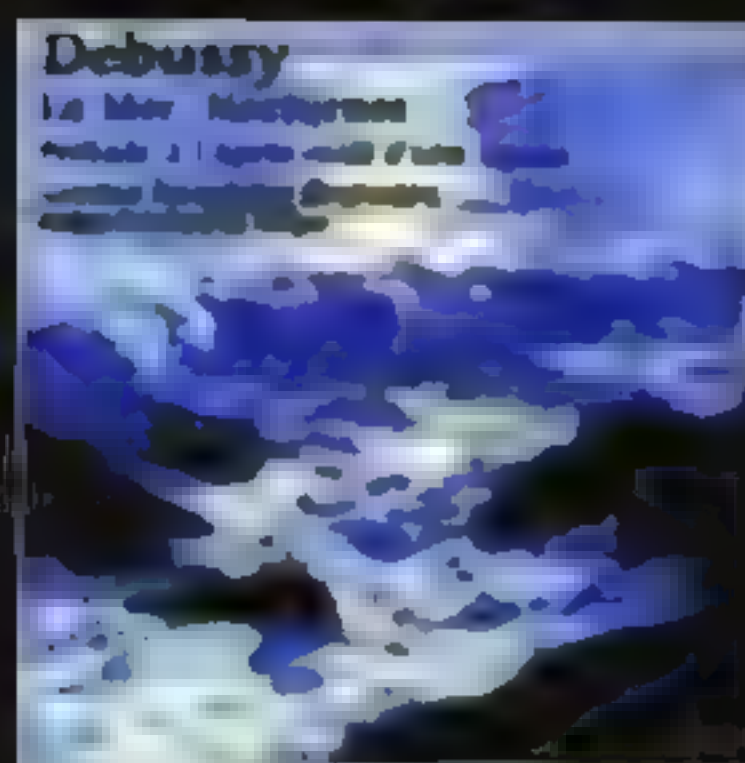
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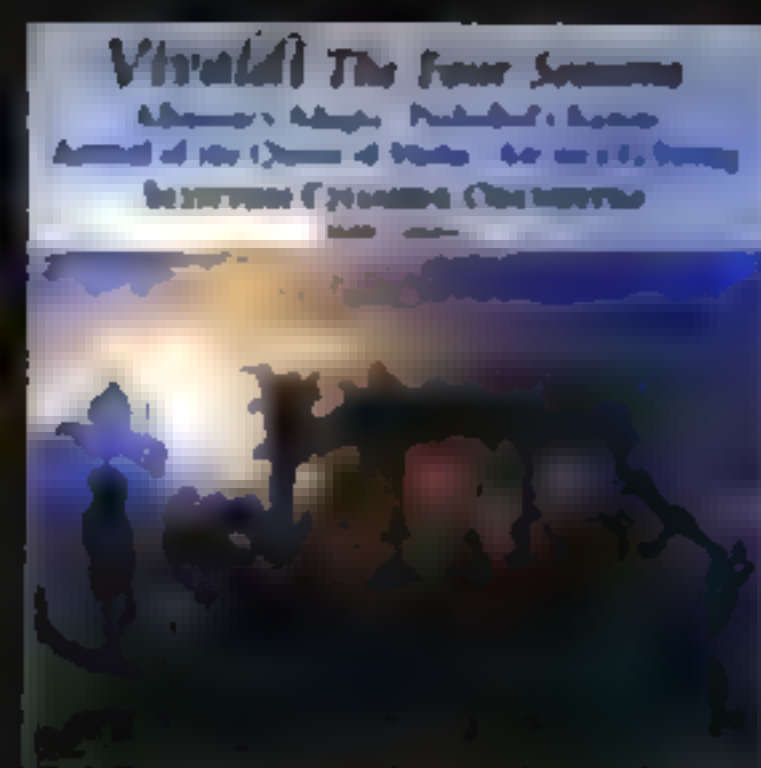
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a touch dull; they might even find that they scarcely recognise old favourites. But they are superbly done, and the performances give what I would consider the best avenue yet to gaining access to Machaut's still perplexing but always irresistible art.

There is one slightly eccentric detail about choice of pieces. They perform all of the last six motets (Nos 18-23); but of the main body of 17 motets, now often considered to form a coherent cycle, they omit five, among them the first. The explanation in the 'Performers' Note' is disarming: 'We recorded those...which we found most interesting to perform...without implying any musical judgement against those we left out.' Bravo to that as an attitude; all the same, it is a slight pity.

David Fallows

SCHOENBERG

N

Die Jakobsleiter. Friede auf Erden, Op 13
Dietrich Henschel bar Gabriel; Salomé
Kammer, Heidi Meier, Anett Taube,
Isabelle Vosskühler sops Kurt Azesberger,
Jonas Kaufmann, Ulrich Lön, Kurt Stephan
Rügamer, Georg Taube tens James Johnson,
Michael Volle bars Berlin Radio Chorus;
Deutsches Symphony Orchestra, Berlin /
Kent Nagano

Harmonia Mundi CD/SACD 92. ② HMC80 1821
(60 minutes: DDD)

Enhanced CD with full autograph score
Texts and translations included

Die Jakobsleiter – selected comparison:
Boulez (12/93) (SONY) SMK48462

An admirable team capture the burning
intensity of a bold, ambitious conception



Schoenberg's burning desire to do philosophical justice to those complex religious questions which preoccupied him for so long might not have left him with insoluble compositional problems, but it

certainly didn't help him to finish his large-scale musical attempts to tackle those questions. The non-completion of *Die Jakobsleiter* can be ascribed in part to such mundane factors as being called up for military service in 1917: yet it's hard not to feel that Schoenberg needed to leave the oratorio unfinished, as a symbol of man's eternally frustrated aspiration to grasp ultimate truths while still alive.

The mixed messages that result from the composer's copious draftings, and occasional later efforts, to make what exists of the work performable, mean that no text can claim absolute authenticity, and scholars continue to debate the strengths and weaknesses of the version by Winfried Zillig (revised by Rudolf Stefan) which was first published in 1980. Pierre Boulez used this as the basis for a recording which, despite some excellent individual performances, couldn't entirely conceal the conductor's lack of empathy with Schoenberg's heady brew of Balzac, Strindberg and Swedenborg. Kent Nagano and his admirable team capture the music's combustible intensity as well as its high-flown spirituality, despite preferring a higher degree of song to 'song-speech' (*Sprechgesang*) than the composer probably wanted. But – listening to the ordinary CD version – I'm not persuaded that the way the soul soars free in the final stages, with a simplicity that any present-day Holy Minimalist could identify with, is a convincing outcome

to the turbulent soul-searchings which precede this moment of release.

Characteristically, Schoenberg has left us with the problem rather than the solution, but Schoenbergian problems never fail to absorb the listener, and this well-integrated and effectively recorded reading is a worthy attempt at one of the composer's boldest and most ambitious conceptions. Topping and tailing the oratorio-fragment with *Friede auf Erden* brings the enterprise gently down to earth. Both the orchestral arrangement and the *a cappella* choral version are done here with all the necessary fervour.

Arnold Whittall

SOILE ISOKOSKI

N

'Suomalainen rukous – Finnish Sacred Songs'

Anonymous Praise the Lord, O my soul
Hannikainen Everything for Jesus, Op 38
No 5. Our Father, Op 24. Traveller's Hymn.
Our Homeland P Hannikainen Guardian
Angel Kilpinen Psalm 103 Klemetti Over
the Weary Land, Op 33 No 3 Krohn Bright
Water T Kuusisto Finnish Prayer². At the
Foot of the Cross, Op 6 No 2 Maasalo With
a Thousand Tongues. Come to me, Lord Jesus
Madetoja I want to go home, Op 71 No 1
Merikanto Sunrise Gilds the Cemetery,
Op 74 No 4. Ave Maria. I Bless Ye, Op 84
No 1 Pesonen Let Us Thank the Lord!

Pylkkänen Pastorale² Rautavaara Evening
Prayer² (all arr I Kuusisto except²)
Soile Isokoski sop Helsinki Philharmonic
Orchestra / John Storgårds

Online ② ODE1034-2 (51 minutes: DDD)
Texts and translations included

A Finnish treat – sacred songs lovingly
arranged and beautifully sung



A very domestic disc indeed, this: everything sung in Finnish, and most of the music by composers unknown outside their native land. But the sacred solo song was (or perhaps one should say is, given

the presence of Rautavaara in the collection) an important genre, and not just in Finland. I suppose an equivalent British disc might include Stanford, Harry Rowe Shelley and Tavener, but each country has its own version of this kind of tradition, and it is interesting to listen to the rather Germanic romanticism of many of the pieces included here and contrast them with the glimpses of wider horizons to be heard in the Madetoja item ('Kotihin mielin') or the three settings by Merikanto, providing hints of Wagner or Szymanowski while retaining a foot firmly in Finnish folk tradition. Lesser-known names are also likely to provoke considerable interest, to judge by the quality of the works included here by Armas Maasalo and the opera composer Tauno Pylkkänen.

Soile Isokoski is, of course, completely at home with this repertoire, and the warmth of her voice – complemented perfectly by that of the Helsinki Philharmonic under the direction of the astoundingly versatile John Storgårds (you can hear him take related repertoire, from Finnish hymn books, in a quite different direction with the Virtuosi di Kuhmo and saxophonist Jukka Perko on Blue Note). The arrangements are superbly done, and the orchestra play them as to the manner born. Any fan of Isokoski's lovely sound, or of Finnish music, should not hesitate.

Ivan Moody



ALFRED
DELLER

Portrait of a Legend

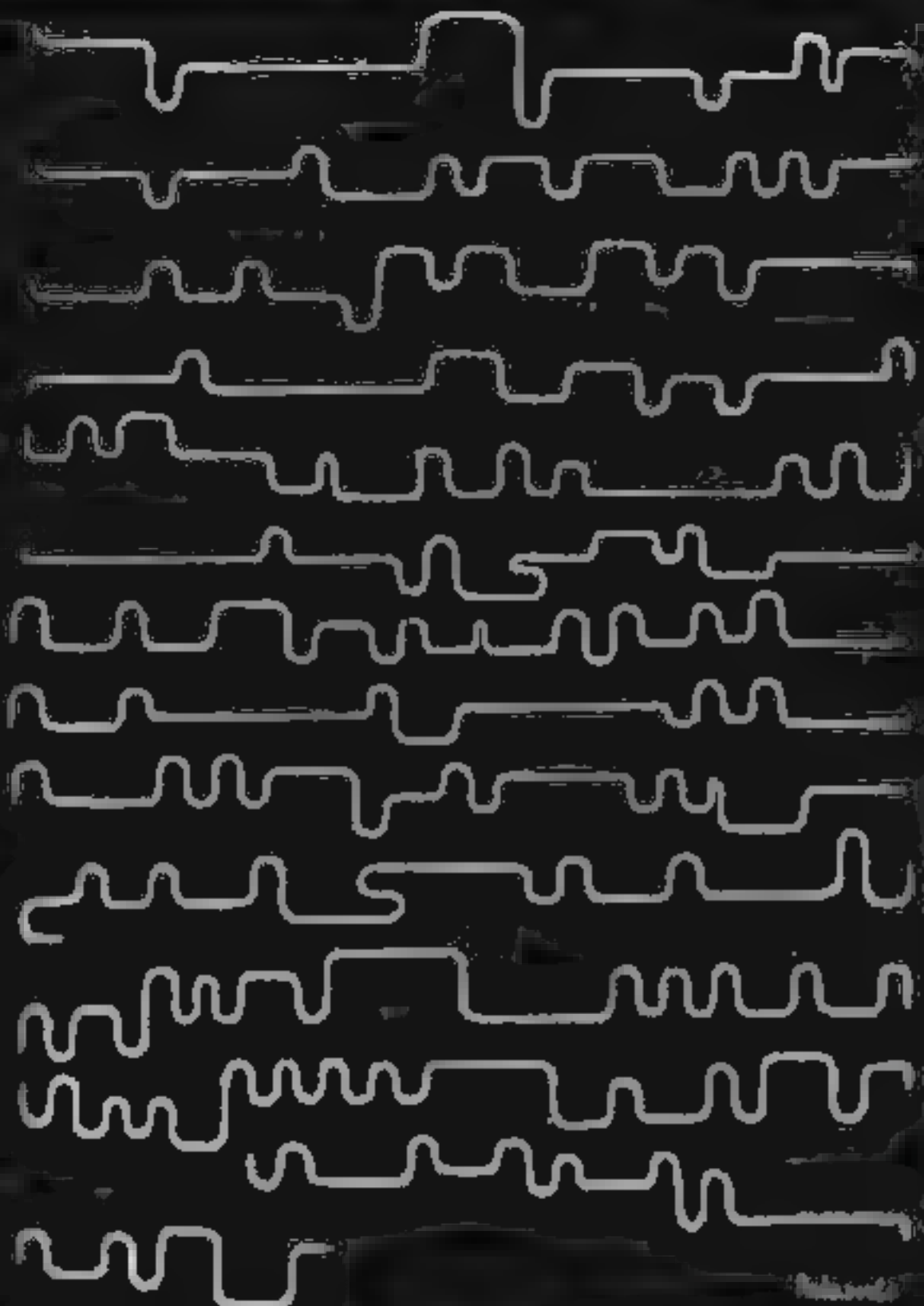


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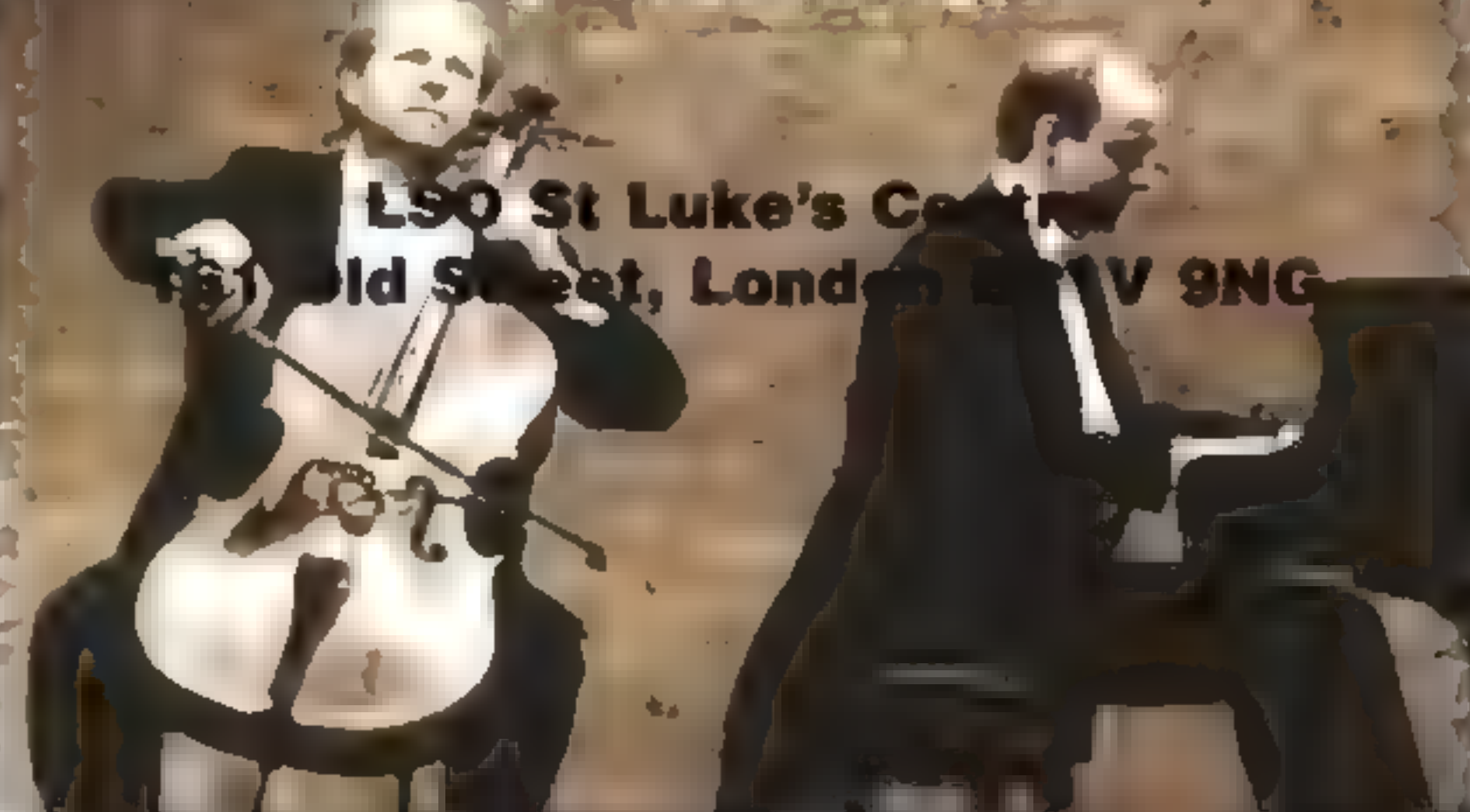
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MAGDALENA KOŽENÁ

N

Britten A Charm of Lullabies, Op 4^a
 Ravel Trois Chansons madécasses^b
 Respighi Il tramonto^c Schulhoff Drei
 Stimmungsbilder, Op 12^d Shostakovich Five
 Satires, Op 109^e
 Magdalena Kožená *mez* Henschel Quartet
 (d) Christoph Henschel, Markus Henschel *vns*
 Monika Henschel-Schwind *va* Matthias D
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 DG © 471 581-2GH (64 minutes: DDD)

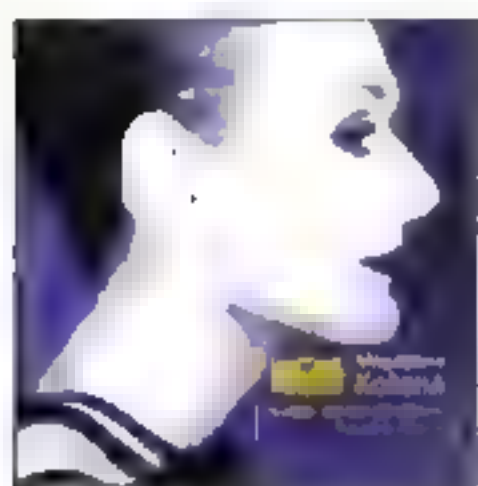
Respighi – selected comparison:

Von Otter, Brodsky Qt (8/00R) (CHAL) CC72098

Shostakovich – selected comparison:

Vishnevskaya, Rostrupovich (9/76R) (EMI) 565716-2

A wide-ranging and imaginative collection,
 sung with skill and sensitivity



Here is a career worth following. In the past couple of years Magdalena Kožená has shown an admirable determination to push at the boundaries of her artistry. On stage, she has gone from a picture of archetypal femininity as Zerlina at Salzburg to the gritty realism of an Idamante in battle fatigues at Glyndebourne; while her recitals have ranged across many languages and styles, including the five contrasting 20th-century composers she brings together here.

The one constant feature is vocal beauty. Kožená's mezzo is a young gazelle of a voice, soaring up into soprano territory as easily as Anne Sofie von Otter or Susan Graham, and it takes very kindly to the recording process. There is not a moment on this disc where the tone sounds strained or its beauty manufactured.

The performance of Respighi's super-romantic *Il tramonto* is near-heavenly. Kožená and the Henschel Quartet hold at bay the temptation to wallow, while giving the music the sunset glow it craves – a clear first choice over von Otter and the Brodskys, who are rather dour by comparison. The Schulhoff songs, not otherwise available as a set, inhabit a similar hot-house atmosphere and Kožená is again sensitive and subtle. Ravel's *Chansons madécasses* are less successful. Although her French is good, Kožená allows herself too much time – hardly any other singer on disc is as slow – and the fine line that these songs tread between an imaginary world and the harshness of reality is obscured by an unwanted soft-focus gauze.

The Shostakovich and Britten cycles work on a different level. When Kožená sang the Shostakovich *Satires* at the Wigmore Hall she was criticised for a lack of satirical bite. Hearing them again here, I am not sure the complaint is valid, as the playful sparkle she and Malcolm Martineau bring to the songs has a sly undercutting edge of its own (though I shall not be parting with the fearsome authority of Vishnevskaya's recording in a hurry). Britten's *Charm of Lullabies* has attracted surprisingly few singers and Kožená deserves thanks for bringing it to notice. Subtle as ever, often hauntingly beautiful, she makes the cycle as intriguing as anybody and even has a valiant go at Robert Burns's thick Scots in 'The Highland Balou'. Did anybody say 20th-century songs were difficult to enjoy? Here is a disc where they cast a spell of enchantment.

Richard Fairman

Magdalena Kožená answers
 'A Question to...' on page 9

GEORGI VINOGRADOV

H

Songs and arias by various composers including
 Glinka O say, why did you come? How sweet
 to be with you. I am here, Inezilla Gounod
 Roméo et Juliette – Ange adorable Ippolitov-
 Ivanov Ole the Norseman – Ole's Arioso
 Mussorgsky Sorochintsy Fair – Why, my sad
 heart? Rachmaninov Songs, Op 26 – No 5,
 Beloved, let us fly; No 12, The night is sad
 Rimsky-Korsakov Beauty, Op 51 No 4
 Rossini Il barbiere di Siviglia – Ecco ridente il
 cielo; Se il mio nome Rubinstein The Demon
 – On desire's soft, fleeting wing. The Azra,
 Op 32 No 6. The sun is shining, Op 48 No 12
 Schubert Die schöne Müllerin, D795
 Schumann Meine Rose, Op 9 No 2. Der
 Nussbaum, Op 25 No 3. Mit Mythen und Rosen,
 Op 24 No 9 Taneyev How you caress, silvery
 night, Op 18 No 1 Tchaikovsky Eugene
 Onegin – Faint echo of my youth. The mild stars
 shone for us, Op 60 No 12. For Children, Op 54
 – No 3, The grass grows green; No 4, My little
 garden; No 9, The snow is already melting; No
 10, Lullaby in a storm; No 13, Spring song.
 Romeo and Juliet – Duet

Georgi Vinogradov *ten* with various artists
 Guild mono © 4 GHCD2250/3

(4 hours 49 minutes: AAD). Recorded 1938-54

More of Russia's musical history revealed
 by this compendium of a fine tenor's art

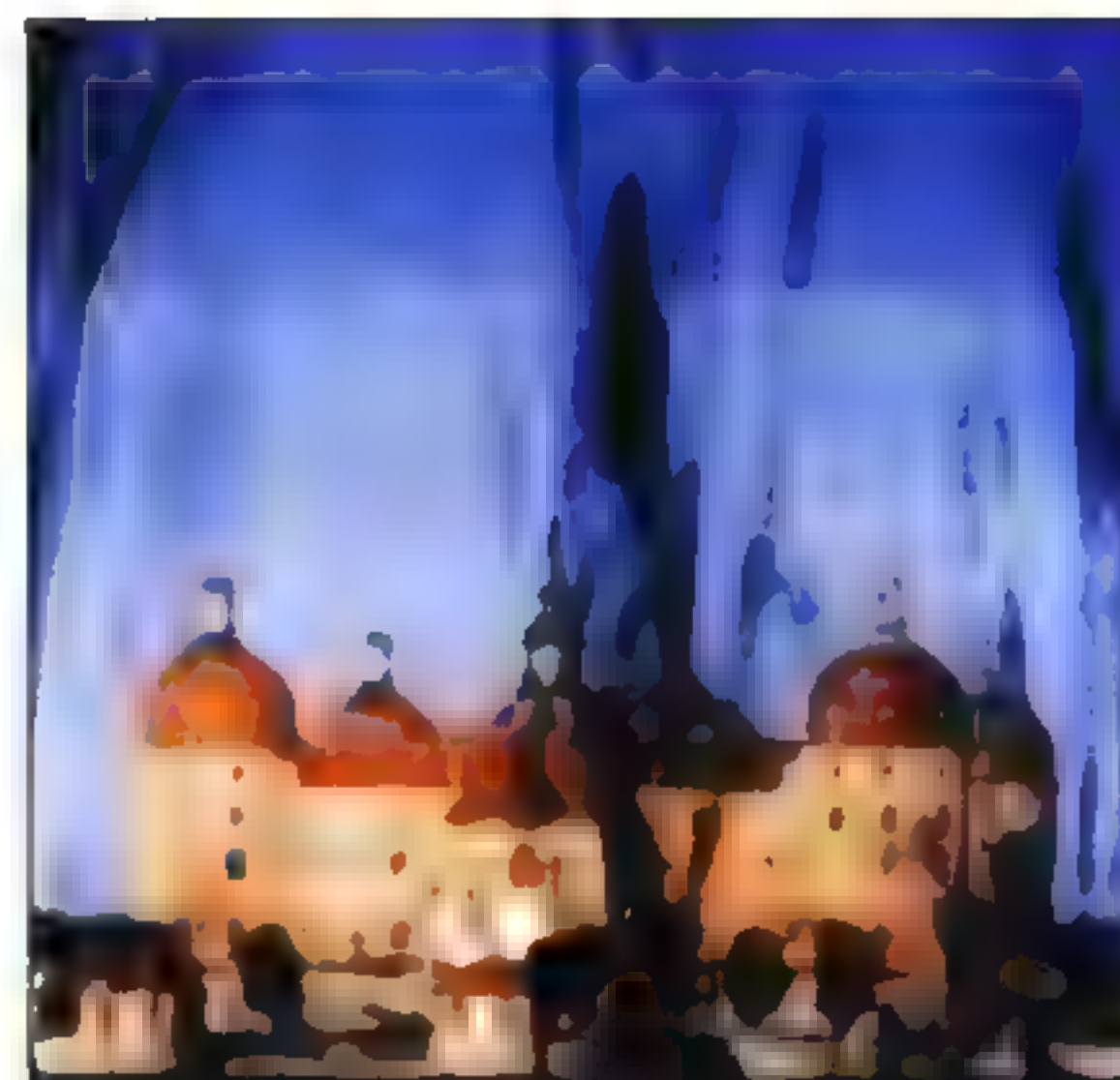


For most of us, large areas of Russia and its history remain *terra incognita*, and this applies to singers as to much else. Syd Gray's pioneering LP albums on his Rubini label and the monumental (and prize-winning) 'Singers of Imperial Russia' on Pearl helped to chart the early years, and by 1970 singers had begun to emerge through gaps cautiously opened in the iron curtain. But (roughly) from 1917 to '67 is still misty, or known only in part.

This tenor, Georgi Vinogradov, for instance, came to notice outside the USSR only in a few anthologies; but then notice was taken, for his record of the solo from *Sorochintsy Fair* challenged comparison with the famous one by Dmitri Smirnov, and his account of Lenski's 'Kouda' was clearly in the best and most authentic line. I don't suppose many thought of him in Schubert and Schumann, or even in operas such as *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *Mignon*, all of which are delightfully represented here. With these four CDs, there is now, in fact, a very nearly complete map of his career as a recording artist; and so a bit more of the Soviet Union in song comes into focus.

How important is it, and how good? Vinogradov was a light lyric tenor who recorded extensively from 1938 to the mid-'50s: but even here, in this reclaimed area, dates are in short supply. Kutsch and Riemens' encyclopedia gives his dates as 1908-80 (I can't see any reference to his death in the ample and well-produced booklet). No evidence seems to be forthcoming to show that he had a stage career at all, though he sang some principal lyric roles in opera on radio. Then, although there is general allusion to concert work, nothing very specific appears to be known. The usual reason for a concentration on radio and recording is either some sort of physical disability for the stage (no photograph seems to have been available) or a voice of very limited carrying-power which suits the microphone but not an opera house.

The second question ('How good?') can be answered more decisively. This is a voice of fine



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quality, exceptionally easy in the upper range (E to A), evenly produced, with admirable fluency and clean articulation. An apparently instinctive knowledge of when to use *portamento*, to join phrases, to quicken or slow the pulse, links him back with the *bel canto* singers of an earlier age; yet unlike some of these he had the taste and musicianship to sing Lieder with distinction (albeit in Russian). As with many of his predecessors, he often fulfills himself most endearingly in quite simple, popular music – and it is not a bad idea to get the flavour of his singing and a faithful sound-picture of his voice, by sampling first a few of the songs with guitar on the fourth disc. Some of the claims made on his behalf in the notes may be excessive: for instance, Lensky's aria is indeed beautifully sung but expresses the sadness of a sweet disposition without capturing the tension and pain of a young man who knows that he probably has less than an hour to live.

The set is nevertheless enriching and deserves all gratitude. The original material is of great rarity (and, incidentally, should be properly documented). Richard Caniell's transfers, Larry Friedman's notes and the inspiration of the dedicatee Donald Jackson, are all included in the debt which lovers of good recorded vocal art will be happy to acknowledge.

John Steane

LONDON PRIDE

N

'A celebration of London in song'

RR Bennett Let's go and live in the country
Boyce Spring Gardens **Coward** London Pride
Dacre While London's fast asleep **Dove** Five Am'rous Sighs **Dring** Four Berjeman Songs – Business girls **Fraser-Simson** They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace **Gershwin** A

Damsel in Distress – A Foggy Day **J Kennedy** Mayfair merry-go-round **MacColl** Sweet Thames, flow softly **Monckton** Chalk Farm to Camberwell Green **Owen Norris** Big Ben Blues **B Scott** Take me in a Taxi, Joe **Sherwin** A Nightingale sang in Berkeley Square

Sisson Wimbledon Idyll **Swann** Joyful Noise

Walton A Song for the Lord Mayor's Table – Rhyme **S Wilson** The Boy Friend – A Room in Bloomsbury

Catherine Bott sop **David Owen Norris** pf

Hyperion © CDA67457 (72 minutes: DDD)

Recorded live at The Savage Club, London on May 23 and 26, 2003

Texts included

A capital compendium of songs dealing with the highs – and lows – of life in London



This is a souvenir of what was obviously a jolly evening, a cabaret of songs about London presented as part of the Spitalfields Festival in 2002, and recreated for this recording at the Savage Club. The main item on the programme is Jonathan Dove's *Five Am'rous Sighs*, a song-cycle on poems by Lady Mary Wortley Montague and Matthew Prior. The theme is that of love gone wrong, the words elegantly underlined by Dove's music, with just a hint of 18th-century pastiche.

There is such a wealth of material to be rediscovered by light-music composers of the late 19th and 20th centuries, and there are some gems here, which if familiar to specialists, will be new to many listeners. Lionel Monckton's 'Chalk Farm to Camberwell Green' from *Bric-à-Brac* (1915), was composed for Monckton's wife,

Gertie Millar. Catherine Bott gives it rather more voice than Millar does on her famous recording (PMC7145 – nla). Conversely, Bott talks Fraser-Simson's setting of AA Milne's *They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace* a good deal more than its originator. *Wimbledon* by Kit and the Widow is a cautionary tale about road rage after the tennis tournament, which Bott delivers in an authentic 'refined' accent. Joyce Grenfell's collaboration with Donald Swann, *Joyful noise* is a satire on the work of an amateur chorus, heroic but sad.

David Owen Norris provides spirited accompaniments and also sings Billy Mayerl's *Mayfair Merry-go-round*, as well as joining Bott in the duet from Sandy Wilson's *The Boy Friend*. Two contrasting music-hall songs are both surprises. Harry Dacre's melancholy waltz, *While London's sleeping* describes the plight of the homeless and starving. Victorian Londoners were, as Bott writes in her introduction, 'less afraid of sentiment'. Yet they were also heartily cynical about romance, and *Take me in a taxi, Joe* by AJ Mills and Bennett Scott, a number from the repertoire of Vesta Victoria, is my favourite item here.


The inevitable *A nightingale sang in Berkeley Square*, *London pride* and *A foggy day* provide the familiar nostalgic views of town, countered by Richard Rodney Bennett's *Let's go and live in the country*. Bott writes that there don't seem to be enough songs about London's river, and offers only Ewan MacColl's *Sweet Thames, flow softly*. It would be interesting to hear, though, Howard Paul's *Up the Thames to Richmond*, Philip Braham's *The gay river*, Christiné's *All along the dear old tow path* and James W Tate's *Row me on the river, Romeo* – there must be loads of others – maybe that should be the next project?

Patrick O'Connor

A SUPERBLY PERFORMED SURVEY OF PRE-BACH CANTATAS DELIVERED WITH RARE AND RELISHABLE IMAGINATION

Buxtehude Herr, wenn ich nur dich hab, BuxWV38^a. O Gottes Stadt, BuxWV87^a. Wo ist doch mein Freund geblieben?, BuxWV111^{ab} **C Ritter** O amantissime sponse Jesu^a **Tunder** Ach Herr, lass deine liebe Engelein^a. An Wasserflüssen Babylon^a. O Jesu dulcissime **Weckmann** Wie liegt die Stadt so wüste^{ab}

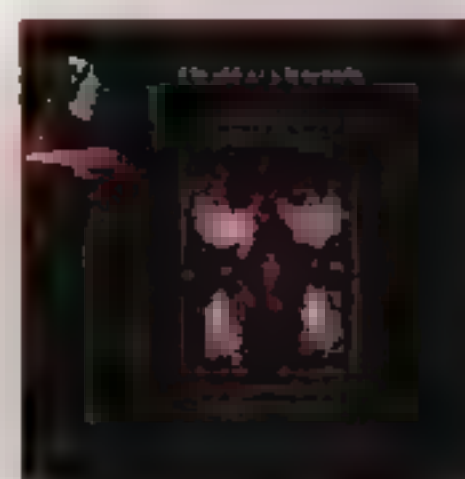
^aJohannette Zomer sop ^bPeter Harvey bass
Netherlands Bach Society /
Jos van Veldhoven

Channel Classics CD/SACD  © CCSSA20804 (67 minutes: DDD)

Texts and translations included

Imaginative programming lies at the heart of Jos van Veldhoven's series with Capella Figuralis and the Netherlands Bach Society. They have already released outstanding discs of 17th-century vocal music under the epithets of 'Saints and Sinners', 'Angels and Shepherds' and 'Love and Lament'. The latest inhabits the intensely expressive world of the German mid-Baroque, a rich tapestry of emotive musical devotion in which organists worked 'off piste' as vocal composers. Buxtehude stands at the apex of this tradition before Bach but his forebears – including his tantalisingly unprolific father-in-law, Franz Tunder – absorbed a Monteverdian blueprint with a remarkable sensibility of their own.

The solo motets here have clearly been chosen on grounds of quality rather than pragmatism. The results are profoundly affecting. Johannette Zomer is the main protagonist and sings



with such range of inflection and commitment that one almost feels that the works were in her blood by right. The texts, as so often with Lutheran poetry, are laden with imagery which requires variation of colour and spiritual immersion but instinctive risks need to be taken and Zomer does just that. She acts as the brooding narrator in Weckmann's extraordinary work, *Wie liegt die Stadt so Wüste*, which depicts the plagued ravages of Hamburg in 1663 by manipulating and reordering *The Lamentations of Jeremiah* to devastating effect. So many performances of this work objectivise the daring harmonic shifts and textural agony with good manners. Zomer's compelling immediacy and the nobility of Peter Harvey's reflective contribution complement each other exceptionally.

Death (for all its ugliness, it has its beauty, too) suits the Teutonic temperament and these works reveal the power of clammy counterpoint, purple harmony and searing melodic direction. Again, Zomer sits as 'prima inter pares' and tenderly within the rich string palette in Tunder's dignified setting of *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*, a chorale of unutterable poignancy which is beautifully controlled. The rhetorical commentary of the strings finds its greatest lyricism in the later generation of Buxtehude as it irradiates his texts with a kind of incremental structure of almost imperceptible momentum. *O Gottes Stadt* is a masterpiece – as are so many of Buxtehude's under-rated chorale works – and Zomer exquisitely pitches



ARENAPAL / MARCO BORGREVE

Jos van Veldhoven with an 'outstanding recital'

this difficult music. How astonishing the contrast of despair to joy where the motif of 'I leap into thy Kingdom' turns on a sixpence.

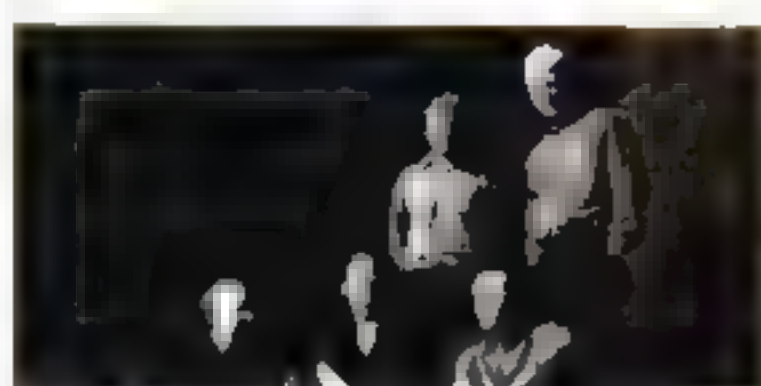
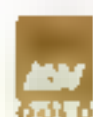
There are fine performances of Christian Ritter's *O amantissime*, a deeply refined Italianate cantata, and Buxtehude's valedictory chaconne *Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe*. A graceful sense of eventide is conveyed to bring this outstanding recital to a close – one whose range of expression should be enjoyed by audiences beyond the early music fraternity. Jonathan Freeman-Attwood



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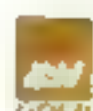
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O TEMPORA, O MORES!

Iain Fenlon on changing performance fashions in the Italian madrigal


Barbara Strozzi, possibly the illegitimate daughter of the poet Giulio Strozzi, was both a composer and a singer, and it shows. These arias and ariette are true performers' music which at their most complex, as in the excerpts here from Opp 7 and 8, range over the whole gamut of human emotion. Cast in several sections, these are lengthy and varied pieces which call upon a high degree of rhetorical control as the music traverses a sequence of styles from declamation to aria and everything in between. Judith Nelson's accounts of these richly rewarding and now much-recorded pieces meet the challenge superbly, and she is sensitively supported by William Christie and Christophe Coin, a vintage cast of considerable historical interest.

Both Nelson and Christie reappear together with René Jacobs and others on another reissue of Italian Baroque vocal music by **Antonio Cesti**. His music has often been praised for its invention and sophisticated vocalty pressed into the service of bitter-sweet expression, qualities which are on strikingly full display in 'Mia tiranna', which is in effect an extended *da capo* aria based on a finely arching melody. It is moments like this which have prompted critics to think of Cesti's most adventurous music as almost 18th century in style, and the sustained and gently contoured lyricism of this piece is well suited to Jacobs' vocal strengths; his decision to avoid extravagant ornamentation and to let the music speak for itself is surely right. The recording is completed with a series of well-chosen extracts from Cesti's opera *Orontea*, written for the Imperial court in Innsbruck in the 1650s.

Somewhat different in approach is Gérard Lesne's record of **Cantatas for solo counter-tenor** by Handel, Bononcini and others, with each composer allotted one disc in a four-disc box set. Alessandro Scarlatti is often described as the founding father of the genre, and the cantatas for two voices on this record (Lesne being beautifully paired here with Sandrine Piau), are truly operatic in character. From here the line is fairly straight to Caldara, Scarlatti's contemporary and a prolific composer of chamber cantatas, and from there to Handel, who spent part of his early career in Italy and clearly knew Scarlatti's music. The final instalment comes with a selection of pieces by Giovanni Battista Bononcini, an associate and later rival of Handel in London; also prolific, he was substantially responsible for spreading the Neapolitan style throughout Europe. Lesne is on fine form in these recordings, sensitive to every textual nuance, responsive to every shift of dramatic direction and (quite literally) breathtakingly effective in the more virtuosic passages. Speeds are carefully chosen, and the instrumental ensemble rise to the challenge of a more equal role (more equal, that is, than in the earlier style of Cesti and Strozzi), with a fine sense of musical purpose and a range of characterisation that runs from the plangent to the comic.

Recordings of Baroque cantatas were comparatively rare in the 1980s. 'Early music' on record often meant the works of a handful of 'masters': Byrd, Palestrina, and Monteverdi above all. The Hilliard Ensemble's 1986 disc of **Palestrina's** spiritual madrigals is an example of the application of an essentially 'Anglican' approach to two cycles of settings of amorous texts, the Vergine cycle from the composer's first book of five-voice madrigals, and the epic sequence of motets on words from the Song of songs published three years later. There can be no doubt of the extraordinarily high technical quality of these performances, beautifully voiced, sensitively phrased, and exquisitely shaped in all their details in a way which we have come to know as the hallmark of The Hilliard's immediately recognisable style. Nonetheless, it is interesting to speculate whether, faced with the same music today, the group would not be tempted to move in a more 'Italianate' direction, less controlled perhaps but ultimately more dramatic in its potential emotional range.

and Leoncavallo. Reissues like the present one are not only a worthy monument to a particularly important moment in the recording history of a particular group of works (as this clearly was), but also a gentle reminder of the mutability of taste.

Something of a middle position is occupied by Tragicomedia's collection of **Madrigali concertati**; here the diction may not be perfect, but the performances are full of infectious commitment, as the singers convincingly traverse a sequence of moods from a mischievously jaunty version of *Tornate, o cari baci* to the grief of *S'el cor vostro cor, madonna*, via a truly wicked account of Guarini's playful *Eccomi pronta ai baci*. Some may find the occasional (deliberate) roughnesses of tone in the male voices an irritating mannerism, but the spirit is right. Pride of place must go to the quite exquisite, heartbreakingly effective performance of the *Lamento della ninfa*, and for this alone all serious Monteverdians will want to own this welcome reissue. 



ARENA PAL / HANYA CHLALA

Performances 'full of infectious commitment' make Tragicomedia's **Madrigali concertati** collection a must for Monteverdians


A similar question is raised by the reissue of a very substantial portion of **Monteverdi's** madrigal output recorded by The Consort of Musick at various times during the early 1990s. The selection itself is a little strange, since it excludes the Fourth and Fifth Books, the latter a particularly significant milestone in the composer's career as a madrigalist, both of which The Consort recorded in their entirety. Readers of *Gramophone* will be familiar with my own view that a new generation of Italian ensembles marks something of a fresh start in the interpretation of this music. As native speakers they have access to the kind of understanding of the meaning (in a many layered sense) of Monteverdi's poetic texts unique to native speakers, and the necessary musical understanding. There are now a group of ensembles and interpreters (Il Concerto Italiano and La Venexiana principal among them) who really understand the intimate bonding of words and music that lies at the heart of the genre, but who have not cut their musical teeth on a diet of Puccini

THE RECORDINGS


Strozzi Nelson

Harmonia Mundi Curiosita  HMX290 1114
(46 minutes: ADD)


Cesti Concerto Vocale / Jacobs

Harmonia Mundi Curiosita  HMX290 1018
(58 minutes: AAD)


Cantatas for solo counter-tenor Lesne

Virgin Classics  562247-2
(4 hours 23 minutes: DDD)


Palestrina Hilliard Ensemble

Virgin Veritas  562239-2 (106 minutes: DDD)

Monteverdi Consort of Musick / Rooley

Virgin Classics  562268-2
(7 hours 25 minutes: DDD)

Monteverdi Tragicomedia

Apex  2564 60710-2 (74 minutes: DDD)

OPERA

Puccini revelations • Starry Rameau • Calleja makes his mark

FALLA

N

La Vida breve

Ana María Sánchez *sop* Salud; María José Suárez *sop* Carmela; Vincente Ombuena Valls *ten* Paco; Alicia Nafé *mez* Grandmother; Alfonso Echeverría *bass* Uncle Sarvaor; Enrique Baquerizo *ten* Manuel; Pedro Sanz *ten* Singer; Antonio Reyes *gtr* Prince of Asturias Foundation Choir; Asturias Symphony Orchestra / Maximiano Valdes
Naxos © 8 660155 (64 minutes: DDD)
Notes and libretto included

Selected comparison:

Frühbeck de Burgos (A/O1) (EMI) 567587-2

A native cast has the measure of Falla's colourful tragedy



With its tragic denouement, its two short acts and its duration of just over an hour, Falla's *La Vida breve* is very much a Spanish counterpart of the eternal *Cav* and *Pag*. As such it makes a sensible

and welcome addition to Naxos's budget opera classics. If the plot itself has little development, Falla's colourful music evolves magnificently, especially in its magical evocation of night falling over Granada and in its colourful Spanish dance rhythms. Vocally the opera hangs and falls on the contribution of the singer of Salud, the gipsy girl who has been courted by Paco and in Act 2 falls dead after discovering that he has treacherously married someone else.

The Salud here, Ana María Sánchez, has a suitably powerful and well-projected voice, and one with the right combination of soprano and mezzo colour. In support, Alicia Nafé (without whom no recording of this opera currently seems to be complete) is impressive here as Salud's grandmother, and Antonio Reyes is an outstanding flamenco guitarist. The orchestral and choral contribution is strong and idiomatic, too, notably in the exciting Act 2 scene 2 dance. Yet, when it comes to comparisons, there are recorded performances elsewhere that are more imaginative and exciting. Ana María Sánchez's main drawback is a lack of variation of tone and volume that in such a concentrated role becomes a shade wearing before the opera is through. Teresa Berganza's performance under García Navarro for DG is not currently available; but both those of Victoria de los Angeles are – most particularly the classic 1966 recording, which has her at her most touchingly vulnerable, supported by vivid orchestral playing, and magical conducting from Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos. Other things being equal, that's the recording to go for, though this Naxos recording will serve well enough if funds are limited.

Andrew Lamb

HANDEL

N

Imeneo

Kay Stieffermann *bass* Imeneo; Johanna Stojkovic *sop* Rosmene; Ann Hallenberg *mez* Tirinto; Siri Karoline Thornhill *sop* Clomiri; Locky Chung *bass* Argenio; Cologne Vocal Ensemble; Capella Augustina / Andreas Sperring
CPO © 2 CPO999 915-2
(122 minutes: DDD)
Notes, libretto and translation included
Justice is belatedly done to an unjustly neglected example of late Handel



Did someone say that Handel's opera plots were too complicated? Not *Imeneo*: Princess Rosmene, rescued from pirates by Imeneo, has to choose between him and her former beloved, Tirinto.

After going into a trance, she decides in favour of Imeneo, reason and gratitude prevailing over love (and that, incidentally, is how Hymen, or in Italian Imeneo, became god of marriage).

Handel composed the opera in 1738 but didn't perform it until 1740; it had a mere two performances, then another in Dublin in 1742. It is typical of his later operatic manner, lightly scored, relatively short of phrase, unheroic in tone and sometimes gently ironic. But the plot allows scope for some deeply felt music, from the unfortunate Tirinto, the original castrato part, and of course from Rosmene herself; and her final aria in particular, with its strange shifts of key, movingly suggests the disorientation and internal conflict that she has suffered. A particularly fine number is the *terzetto* for Rosmene and her two lovers at the end of Act 2 – the only ensemble in the opera beside the choruses, for the duets that Handel added (arguably at the expense of the drama) for Dublin are not included.

I found the opera much more compelling here than one might have expected from the plot, or indeed than I can remember from the three theatre productions I have seen. The opera is taken seriously. The singer of Rosmene, Johanna Stojkovic, has a commanding manner and a bright, firm voice. Her desolate little arietta at the beginning of the Second Act is beautifully poised, with some nice details of timing, and the stormy aria that soon follows and the one that opens Act 3 have fine attack and precise detail. Anna Hallenberg's Tirinto shows a pure, high mezzo capable of delicate expressive singing; her gentle opening aria is touchingly done, and the noble declamatory one at the end has considerable power. I wish the conductor had allowed her a little more time over her central showpiece, 'Sorge nell'alma' (music that foreshadows 'Why do the nations'). The role of Clomiri, Rosmene's confidante (unrequitedly in love with Imeneo), is sung lightly and with much charm by Siri Karoline Thornhill.

For the Dublin version, Handel made Imeneo into a tenor; here the original lower version at baritone pitch is preferred. Kay Stieffermann sings it with considerable agility and in forthright fashion (which I suppose is apt for someone who has single-handedly slain a crew of pirates and then demands his reward). The music for Rosmene's father, Argenio, is neatly shaped by Locky Chung, with some effective expression of the words through his phrasing. Several singers add a little appropriate ornamentation in the *da capo* sections.

Andreas Sperring directs effectively and draws precise playing from his orchestra, which is modest in size (strings 5.4.3.2.1); in several arias he allows rather over-energetic, almost rough playing and at times the bass-line is unshapely and allowed to plod. But as a whole this is an impressive recording that belatedly does justice to an unjustly neglected opera.

Stanley Sadie

HENZE

N

Pollicino

Philipp Holstein *tréb* Pollicino; Laila Fischer *sop* Clotilde; Therese Affolter *sngtr* Pollicino's Mother; Thomas Schendel *sngtr* Pollicino's Father; Stefan Lisewski *sngtr* Ogre; Lore Brunner *sngtr* Ogre's Wife; Berlin Music Schools Chorus and Orchestra / Jobst Liebrecht
Wergo © 2 WER6664-2
(88 minutes: DDD)

Notes, libretto and translation included

An enchanting recording of Henze's fairy-tale children's opera based on Grimm



Slowly but surely, Henze's operas are finding their way on to disc. Gaps remain in the catalogue: the early one-acters, *Das verratene Meer*, and *Venus and Adonis* (L'Upupa, premiered just last year, is still too recent), while *The Prince of Homburg* is available only on DVD. Even if *Elegy for Young Lovers* and the Casavalle recording of *Boulevard Solitude* have not held their place on the shelves, it seems extraordinary that *The Bassarids* has only recently achieved a second recording.

Composed in 1979-80 for the children of Montepulciano in Tuscany, where Henze ran his renowned music festival, *Pollicino* ('Tom Thumb') is arguably his most approachable opera, with a well-known story, a simplified – although far from simple – musical style and great charm. It would make an enterprising, and musically more satisfying, alternative to Noye's *Fludde* (there are also opportunities for dressing up in the delightful forest scene). The instrumental demands are not excessive – except in the area of percussion – and requires only a handful of adults for certain roles.

A SUPERB NEW ACCOUNT GIVEN A MORE APPEALINGLY ITALIANATE FLAVOUR THAN MANY OF THE RIVAL RECORDINGS

L'Orfeo

Ian Bostridge *ten* Orfeo; **Patrizia Ciofi** *ten* Euridice; **Natalie Dessay** *sop* La Musica; **Alice Coote** *ten* Messenger; **Sonia Prina** *ten* Speranza; **Mario Luperi** *ten* Caronte; **Véronique Gens** *ten* Prosperina; **Carolyn Sampson** *ten* Nymph; **Lorenzo Regazzo** *ten* Plutone; **Christopher Maltman** *ten* Apollo; **Shepherd III**; **Paul Agnew** *ten* Eco; **Shepherd II**; **Pascal Bertin** *ten* Shepherd I; **Richard Burkhard** *ten* Shepherd IV **European Voices**; **Le Concert d'Astrée** / **Emmanuelle Haïm**
Virgin Classics Veritas Ⓢ Ⓣ 545642-2
 (96 minutes: DDD)

Selected comparison:

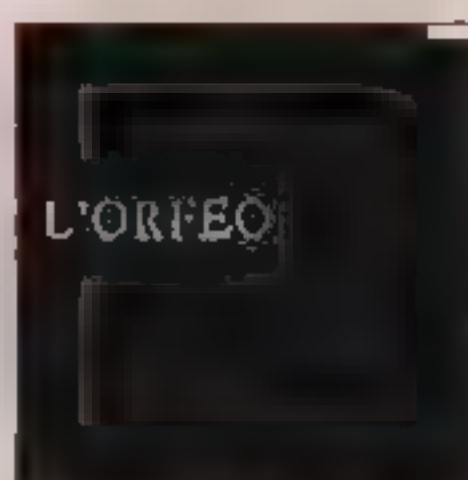
Medlam (6/86R) (EMI) 764947-2

Gardiner (12/87) (ARCH) 419 250-2AH2

Pickett (2/93) (L'OI) 433 545-2OH2

Monteverdi's first music drama was performed for his Gonzaga patrons in Mantua on February 24, 1607. In his illuminating booklet-note, Professor Tim Carter regards *L'Orfeo* as the first great opera. Few would quibble with that verdict, but it is surprising how rarely it has been recorded in a fully fledged operatic style that sounds as if it derives from a 21st-century theatre rather than a polished Mantuan palazzo. Instead of attempting an intellectual reconstruction, Emmanuelle Haïm presents a full-blooded reinvention of the opera that is firmly modernistic.

Haïm and Virgin Classics have assembled a cast that is primarily constituted of world-class opera and recital singers, and the overall result is even, cohesive and without vocal blemishes. Some sopranos featured represent the fading



legacy of 'authenticity' better than others. Natalie Dessay's forthright declamation as La Musica in Monteverdi's exquisite prologue is emotive, but cannot eclipse Gardiner's astute Lynne Dawson. In contrast, Carolyn Sampson's fleeting contribution as a Nymph is gorgeously refined and elegantly poised, suggesting that she might make a fine La Musica if given the chance. Véronique Gens is a creamy Prosperina whose tangible pity for Orfeo makes her a very human goddess. Alice Coote's Messenger provides the most compelling moment with a haunted voice full of eloquent pain. The title-role suits Ian Bostridge, and his thoughtfully considered singing effortlessly ranges between smouldering gestures in 'Vi ricorda ò bosch' ombrosi' and shivering disbelief when the messenger tells him that Euridice is dead.

European Voices incline towards a full-blooded operatic sound rather than a cool choral blend, although a slightly smaller body of singers might have emphasised the madrigalesque quality of the music with more intimacy. Le Concert d'Astrée serve as a linchpin that propels the drama forward with obsessive momentum. The pumping sackbuts during the introductory toccata indicate that the ensuing drama is not going to be dull, and Les Sacqueboutiers also provide a splendid regal entrance to a vision of Dante's Inferno in Act 3. The strings produce *ritornelli* of magnificent sensitivity and resonating eroticism. I disliked Haïm's excessive peppering of Monteverdi's score with prominent and improvisational percussion bashing away in a manner that veers between a holiday in Tenerife and a street market in Marrakesh. Disc 1 ends with a presumably funereal solo drumbeat that sounds like a giant elastic band.



TOBY WALES

Ian Bostridge's 'thoughtfully considered singing' in the title role provides a vivid focus

It would be condescending to the considerable achievements of Charles Medlam, Sir John Eliot Gardiner and Philip Pickett to simplistically describe Haïm's work as the best *Orfeo* available, and anyone who owns those estimable recordings need not let them gather dust yet. But it is notable that Haïm's performance has a much stronger Italianate sense than the comparatively English school that has hitherto dominated the discography, and her compelling perspective on Monteverdi's opera certainly possesses a lively spirit that makes the listening hours fly by. Purists will be divided over the liberties Haïm takes, but her performance contains a wealth of musical interest, and I recommend it as a stimulating alternative to the fine pedigree of recordings that has preceded it.

David Vickers

The opera's 12 scenes play continuously, punctuated by five interludes. In Henze's version (to a libretto by Giuseppe da Leva), Pollicino and his six siblings are twice left to fend for themselves in a wintry forest by their impoverished parents. Both times Pollicino realises what is happening: but where first he marks out the path home with pebbles, the second time he is forced to use breadcrumbs which the birds eat, stranding the children. The animals give advice and a wolf takes them to the only other habitation in the forest – unfortunately, the home of a man-eating ogre who plans to cook the children for a feast of the local Ogres' Union! Happily, Pollicino engineers their escape through the help of the ogre's own children, who are led by Clotilde, and at the opera's conclusion they reach an adult-less Land of Spring.

Wergo's superbly realised first recording has the considerable advantage of employing local Berlin schoolchildren as the majority of players and singers, as Henze specified. Only Pollicino's parents, the Ogre, his wife and the wolf are sung by adults, and joining the grown-ups are the instrumental soloists, the choral trainers and conductor Jobst Liebrecht. True, none of the young singers may be an Aled Jones, but their account is enchanting and a tribute to local music education. There are notes by Liebrecht and Henze, but it is a shame the booklet does not include a clear synopsis.

Guy Rickards

MOZART

N

Le nozze di Figaro

Lorenzo Regazzo *bass* Figaro; **Patrizia Ciofi** *sop* Susanna; **Simon Keenlyside** *bar* Count Almaviva; **Véronique Gens** *sop* Countess Almaviva; **Angelika Kirchschlager** *mez* Cherubino; **Marie McLaughlin** *sop* Marcellina; **Antonio Abete** *bass* Bartolo; **Antonio**; **Kobie van Rensburg** *ten* Don Basilio; **Don Curzio**; **Nuria Rial** *sop* Barbarina; **Ghent Collegium Vocale**; **Concerto Köln** / **René Jacobs**
Harmonia Mundi Ⓢ Ⓣ HMC90 1818/20
 (172 minutes: DDD)

Notes, libretto and translation included

Selected comparison:

Ostman (12/88) (L'OI) 421 333-2OH2

An excellent cast, though this refreshing treatment of Figaro won't be to all tastes

René Jacobs always brings new ideas to the operas he conducts, and even to a work as familiar as *Figaro* he adds something of his own. First of all – and this will be obvious to listeners from the opening bars – he offers an orchestral balance quite unlike what we are used to. Those who specially relish a Karajan or a Solti will hardly recognise the work, with its strongly wind-biased orchestral balance: you simply do not hear the violins as the 'main line' of the music. An excellent corrective to a tradition that was untrue to Mozart, to be sure, but possibly the pendulum has swung a little too far. For my own part, I rather enjoy it, although there are



some string passages that almost get lost.

Jacobs is freer over tempo than most conductors. Sometimes, perhaps most conspicuously in the Act 1 trio where Cherubino is uncovered, the Count's authoritarian pronouncements are given further weight by a faster tempo: it gives them extra decisiveness, but creates an attendant problem as the music then has to slow down. There are other examples of such flexibility, sometimes a shade disconcerting (mainly, perhaps, because we aren't used to it), but always with good dramatic point. The Count's duet with Susanna in Act 3 is one example: the little hesitations enhanced and pointed up, if perhaps with some loss in energy and momentum. Generally speaking, tempi are on the quick side of normal, notably in the earlier parts of the Act 2 finale; but Jacobs is willing to hold back, too, for example in the Susanna-Marcellina duet, in the fandango (very nicely poised), and in the G major music at the dénouement where the Count begs forgiveness – this, to my mind, is overdone, becoming merely solemn and even slightly dull. I'm not always quite convinced that Jacobs's ideas and instincts are truly Mozartian.

Over the years, *Gramophone* readers may have become bored with my repeated advocacy of the use of proper appoggiaturas. There are lots of them here, but quite a few seem to me misguided, or misapplied, and don't sit comfortably (as they nearly always do in Arnold Östman's recording).

It isn't perhaps unreasonable to think that Mozart may sometimes actually have wanted a pair of repeated notes (in that Act 1 trio, for example). I also find myself uncomfortable with the 'creative' fortepiano continuo playing, which often draws attention to itself unduly at the expense of the voices – including, sometimes, in the lyrical music, where the piano supplements (and sometimes confuses) the texture, and in the recitatives where the player too cleverly echoes or pre-echoes phrases from the arias. And there are some oddities in the cello continuo playing, too, more apt to Monteverdi than to Mozart. But the idea of using vocal ornamentation from sources of Mozart's own time, or just after, at the singers' choice, is a happy and very successful one.

The cast is excellent. Véronique Gens offers a beautifully natural, shapely 'Porgi amor' and a passionate and spirited 'Dove sono' (with the piano rampant near the end). The laughter in Patrizia Ciofi's voice is delightful when she is dressing up Cherubino, and she has space in 'Deh vieni' for a touchingly expressive performance. Then there is Angelika Kirschlager's Cherubino, alive and urgent in 'Non so più', every little phrase neatly moulded. Lorenzo Regazzo offers a strong Figaro, with a wide range of voice – angry and determined in 'Se vuol ballare', nicely rhythmic with some softer colours in 'Non più andrai', and pain and bitterness in 'Aprite'. The Count of Simon Keenlyside is powerful, menacing, lean and dark in tone. Marie McLaughlin sings Marcellina with unusual distinction. As in Mozart's performances, the male *comprimario* parts are doubled, Bartolo/Antonio and Basilio/Curzio, and following the precedent of the original singer, Michael Kelly, the Curzio has a stammer – Mozart initially objected to that, but Kelly (or so he says in his reminiscences) won him over.

Strongly cast, imaginatively directed: it's a *Figaro* well worth hearing, though I wouldn't suggest that it challenges the best in the catalogue. And which is that? Well, I'm not really sure, but I get as much pleasure from the Östman version made in Drottningholm by the much lamented Peter Wadland as any. **Stanley Sadie**

OFFENBACH

Orphée aux Enfers (1858 version)^a

Jean Mollien Orpheus; Claudine Collart Eurydice; André Dran Aristeus-Pluto; Bernard Demigny Jupiter; Jean Hoffman John Styx; Lucien Mans Mars; André Jonquères Mercury; Anne Marie Carpentier Juno; Violette Journeaux Public Opinion; Monique Chalot Venus; Simone Pebordes Cupid; Janine Lindenfelder Diane; Paris Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra / René Leibowitz

La Belle Hélène – Au mont Ida^b. La Boulangère a des écus^c – Les charbonniers et les fariniers; Que voulez-vous faire? Les Contes d'Hoffmann – Ah! vivre deux!^d; Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour (Barcarolle)^e; Elle a fui, la tourterelle^f; C'est une chanson d'amour^g. La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein – Pif, Paf, Pouf^h; Dites lui qu'on l'a remarquéⁱ. Madame Favart – Ma mère aux vignes m'envoyait. La Périchole – Ah! quel dîner je viens de faire!^k; Tu n'est pas... Je t'adore brigand^l.
^aLucrezia Bori, ⁱGermaine Corney, ^gEmma Luart, ^fEidé Norena, ^jYvonne Printemps, ^hMaggie Teyte *sops* ^kClaudia Novikova *mez* ^bJussi Björling, ^gGaston Micheletti, ^dMiguel Villabella *tens*

^cReynaldo Hahn *ten/pf* ^eLawrence Tibbett *bar* ^hLouis Musy *bass* ⁱHenri Büsser *pf* ^hchoir; ^{bde}orchestra / ^eRosario Bourdon, ^{dg}Gustav Cloëz, ^fPiero Coppola, ^bNils Grevillius

Regis mono © 2 RRC2063 (129 minutes: ADD)
From ^aNixa PLP204 (8/52), ^brecorded 1927-36

A welcome back to a classic recording of Offenbach's first thoughts on Orpheus



Offenbach's *Orphée aux enfers* has enjoyed more modern recordings than this 1951 offering. EMI has released both the larger-scale 1874 version (1/89), and what is basically the original 1858 version with interpolated 1874 additions (1/99). No recording, though, has come near to challenging this version not only for presenting the original score unadorned but also for capturing the essence of Offenbach's first small-scale concept. Together with the companion recording of *La Belle Hélène* (Regis, 9/03), which Andrew Porter has classed as one of the all-time great recordings, and the 1948 Cluytens *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (EMI, 9/95, and Naxos), it whisks us back to a French performing tradition that was all too soon submerged by record companies' preference for internationally recognised casts.

René Leibowitz, Polish-born, French-adopted 12-tonalist, here emerged as a master of the intimate style of Offenbach's early operettas. He apparently assembled the cast from his pupils, which accounts not only for the relative unfamiliarity of some of the names but also the stylistic unity that so deliciously pervades the whole enterprise. The singers combine to provide just the right youthful feeling that Offenbach's feather-light melodies require. Claudine Collard is a delightfully impish Eurydice, duetting deliciously with Bernard Demigny in the Fly Duet, and there are two winning tenors in Jean Mollien and André Dran. There may be moments of ragged ensemble; but the whole provides testimony to Leibowitz's powers as vocal trainer as much as conductor.

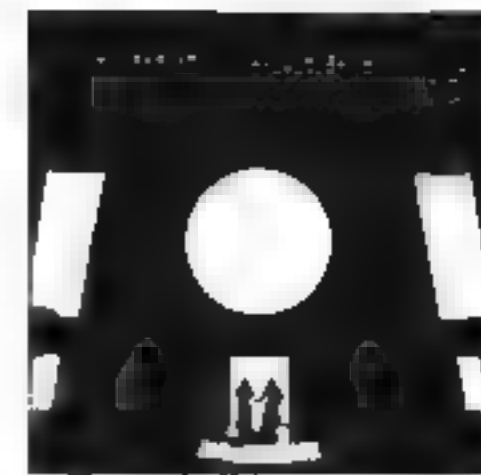
The 12 fillers may be of mixed origins; but, from Björling's glorious Swedish 'Judgement of Paris', Louis Musy's wonderfully swaggering 'Pif, Paf, Pouf' and Claudia Novikova's infectious tippy 'Ah! quel dîner' onwards, each provides a classic demonstration of Offenbach style. **Andrew Lamb**

PUCCINI

'Puccini Discoveries'

Turandot – Act 3, Finale (ed Berio)^a. Manon Lescaut – Act 2, Prelude. Scherzo. Inno a Roma^b. Mottetto per San Paolino^c. Requiem^d. Vexilla regis^b. Salva regina^c. Preludio a Orchestra No 1. Scossa elettrica. Adagetto. Ecce sacerdos magnus. Corazzata Sicilia. Cessato il suon dell'armi^f.
^aEva Urbanová *sop* Turandot; ^aMaria Fontosh *sop* Liù; ^aBülent Bezdüz *ten* Pang; ^aCarlo Bosi *ten* Pong; ^aDario Volonté *ten* Calaf; ^aDomenico Balzani *bar* Ping; ^aMario Luperi *bass* Timur; ^cChiara Taigi *sop* ^fJoseph Calleja *ten* ^cAlberto Mastromarino *bar* ^dGabriele Mugnai *va* ^{bde}Roberto De Thierry *org* Giuseppe Verdi Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Milan / Riccardo Chailly
Decca © 475 320-2DH (81 minutes: DDD)

A fascinating round-up of little-known Puccini, plus that other Turandot ending



Few composers concentrated so completely on writing operas as Puccini did, and all but one of the items on this disc are incidental to his career, whether from his early years, both at school in Lucca and as a music student in Milan, or occasional pieces from later in his career. None of them matches the mastery of his operas, though they all reflect the Puccini we know, and give us fresh insights into him and his career.

The exception is the final item, Luciano Berio's completion of *Turandot*. Like Franco Alfano, who made the regular completion first heard in 1926, Berio used Puccini's sketches for his unfinished ending, but the result is very different. It has left me disappointed in the theatre: Berio's hushed, downbeat ending may be justified dramatically but it is unsatisfying compared with Alfano's *fortissimo* choral reprise of 'Nessun dorma'.

What Riccardo Chailly lets us appreciate, however, is the thoughtfulness of Berio's treatment. The recording begins with Liù's aria, her suicide and Timur's grief, all completed by Puccini; Berio's completion (starting at track 14, 7'27") follows without a break to an orchestral *crescendo* to 'Principessa di morte', quite different from Alfano's blasting *fortissimi*. The orchestral accompaniment differs substantially, but the vocal lines of Turandot and Calaf in their duet are largely similar to those in Alfano's completion, following Puccini's sketches. There is no big chorus after Calaf's and Turandot's final brief exchange, only a gentle easing into silence.

Otherwise, Berio's principal innovation is a substantial orchestral interlude (track 14, 10'50"–13'58"), which makes Turandot's transformation from icy princess to responsive lover more credible, even if dramatically it holds things up. Whether or not Berio's completion is used in any future complete recording, the opportunity to hear it is welcome, just as it was good to hear Alfano's uncut completion (as originally conceived) on Josephine Barstow's disc of operatic final scenes, now deleted (Decca, 9/90).

Seven of the other items are also first recordings. They include his first two surviving works, both written during his schooldays, the *Preludio a Orchestra*, which charmingly becomes a Viennese-style waltz, and the *Motet for San Paolino*, bold and brassy in the outer sections, with a long baritone solo in the middle (rather roughly sung by Alberto Mastromarino). At the other end of Puccini's career comes the *Inno a Roma* of 1919, his last completed work, surprisingly untypical, and later notoriously adopted by Mussolini's fascists using different words. The *Scherzo* of 1882-83 and the *Salva regina*, from his student years in Milan, both provided material for his first opera, *Le villi*, and the tender *Adagetto* for small orchestra from the same period was used for Fidelia's aria in Act 3 of his second opera, *Edgar*.

Other gems include two pieces for wind band: *Corazzata Sicilia*, a development of the march at the end of Act 2 of *Bohème* using material from earlier in the act (the work of a bandmaster) and *Scossa elettrica* ('electric shock') a lively fragment of 1899 with jaunty syncopations, written to celebrate the centenary of Volta's invention of the electric battery. By far the weakest piece, the cantata of 1877, *Cessato il suon*, discovered only a year ago, is one for which the vocal line had to be invented, and one can assume that even the teenage Puccini would have done better.

Chailly inspires excellent performances, with generally fresh, alert singing from soloists and chorus. The booklet-note by Dieter Schickling, author of the comprehensive Puccini catalogue,

is very informative, but my one complaint concerns the lack of texts for the vocal items: a serious omission. **Edward Greenfield**

RAMEAU

N

Castor et Pollux
Colin Ainsworth *countertenor* Castor; Joshua Hopkins *bass* Pollux; Monica Whicher *sop* T  laire; Joey Niceforo *ten* Mercure; Meredith Hall *sop* Ph  b  ; Ren  e Winick *sop* Cl  one; Suivante d'H  b  ; Ombre; Giles Tomkins *bass* Jupiter; Brian McMillan *ten* High Priest of Jupiter; Opera in Concert Chorus; Aradia Ensemble / Kevin Mallon
Naxos    8 660118/9 (141 minutes: DDD)

Selected comparison:

Farncombe (5/95) (ERAT) 4509 95311-2

A true ensemble achievement in Rameau's richly expressive entertainment



Operatic fashion in Paris changed a good deal between 1737, when Rameau's *Castor et Pollux* was first given, and 1754, when he presented the revised version recorded here. The allegorical prologue, by now an anachronism, has gone, and a new Act 1 gives a clearer idea of what the opera is about; the new Acts 2-5 represent a compression of the previous 1-5. It isn't merely a matter of cutting but also of rewriting in a more concentrated form. Several attractive numbers go, however, but some of them were worthily replaced. Rameau rewrote most of the dialogue, in a style that seems to me even richer, expressively, than it was originally.

There is a fine recording under William Christie of the 1737 version (Harmonia Mundi, 7/93); the 1754 text was however used for the 1983 English Bach Festival recording under Charles Farncombe, cited above. The present version, from Canada, offers the opera almost uncut, with a team of singers who, it seems, are mostly new to recording. The result is remarkably successful. Kevin Mallon has a good sense of how to pace the extended dialogue sections and control the dramatic unfolding of the work, and his feeling for Rameau's tempi and the flow of his music is sound. What I miss is the forthright characterisation of the dances that some conductors (including the very capable Farncombe) provide: Rameau's lines are so striking, his orchestration so vivid in these pieces that they ought to be more arresting (listen to the 'Celestial Pleasures' music at the end of Act 3, new to this version and far more imaginative in its invention than anyone else was writing at the time). Some of them seem just a shade tame. And the choral singing, which is subject to vagaries of internal balance, is also lacking in the definition, the incisiveness, that is needed in this French repertory.

There is, however, no want of intensity in the orchestral preludes; the beginning of Act 4 also has some fine playing (notably in the air for the *Ombres heureuses*). Castor is sung by Colin Ainsworth, a high tenor who slips easily into the haute-contre register, sweet and even in tone and often very expressive. The Pollux, Joshua Hopkins, shows a firm and focused baritone, not one of great warmth yet capable of passionate feeling, and he brings due weight to his fine plea to Jupiter in Act 3. T  laire is sung by Monica Whicher, who brings much intensity to her big moments, notably of course the famous and moving air 'Tristes appr  ts' (enhanced by beau-

tifully controlled bassoon playing - the bassoonist distinguishes himself elsewhere too). Giles Tomkins brings due depth of tone to Jupiter, Meredith Hall the necessary power to the music for Ph  b  , and there is a charming contribution from Ren  e Winick as a follower of H  b  .

There is, to my mind, a rather more idiomatic approach and sound to the older recording. On the whole I wouldn't advise trading it in for the new one. Yet this set has many good things, and it is heartening to have a performance of such quality and such feeling for the music and its mode of expression from a group of relatively inexperienced performers. **Stanley Sadie**

R STRAUSS • WAGNER

N

'Obsessions'

R Strauss *Ariadne auf Naxos* - Es gibt ein Reich. Elektra - Ich kann nicht sitzen. Die Frau ohne Schatten - Ist mein liebster dahin; Wehe mein Mann. Salome - Es ist kein Laut zu vernehmen Wagner *Tannh  user* - Dich, teure Halle. Tristan und Isolde - Weh', ach wehe dies zu dulden²; Mild und leise (Liebestod). Die Walk  re - Du bist der Lenz; Der M  nner Sippe
Deborah Voigt *sop* ²Natascha Petrinsky *mez*
Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra / Sir Richard Armstrong
EMI Angel    557681-2 (69 minutes: DDD)

Wagner finds a superb soprano on uneven form, but, oh, how her Strauss soars



This recital was recorded in September 2003, a few months after Deborah Voigt sang her first Isolde, at the Vienna Staatsoper. I only wish that she had been able to take a little more time before committing

this pair of excerpts to posterity, however, as her interpretations move in and out of focus. The Act 1 'Narration and Curse' actually goes rather well. Voigt may not be the most vivid of storytellers, but she seizes enough of the key moments to keep one engaged. Her voice positively smoulders when she tells Brang  ne, 'Seines Elendes jammerte mich!', for example, and the curse itself is spat out. In the Liebestod, though, she sounds detached, conveying little of Isolde's life-draining deliriousness. And while the youthful lightness of her tone in the Narration is an attraction, it works against her in the Liebestod, where it seems that she's being dragged down by the orchestra's undertow rather than soaring above its waves. The other Wagner selections are also uneven. Voigt captures Elisabeth's breathless excitement in 'Dich, teure Halle,' though here her voice has a hard edge I haven't noticed before, and her Sieglinde is bland.

Turn to the Strauss, however, and it's as if one were hearing a different singer. All five selections find Voigt in top form - her voice focused, gleaming, warm, and her portrayals richly detailed. I simply put down my pen and listened with delight as she vaulted through the ecstatic, arching final phrases of *Ariadne's* 'Es gibt ein Reich,' and then swooped over the Kaiserin's treacherous opening aria. But, of course, Voigt has already recorded these - and Chrysothemis, too. The main attraction here, then, is the final scene from *Salome*, and she does not disappoint. What's most impressive about her interpretation, perhaps, is its rhythmic accuracy; *Salome's* cool but crazed capriciousness is expressed in part through the precipitous topography of the melodic line, and Voigt makes the most of even

Le Nozze di Figaro
THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

After the international success of *Coi fan tutte* (HMC 951663.65), René Jacobs directs another great opera in performances which have been enthusiastically received by audiences around the world.

Le Nozze di Figaro
V  ronique Gen   • Patrizia Ciofi
Angelika Kirchschlager • Lorenzo Regazzo
Simon Keenlyside • Antonio Abete
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the smallest syncopation. Her tone is not as luridly glossy as Ljuba Welitsch's (EMI, nla) but it is more realistically girlish, with glimmers both of innocence and a voluptuous, voracious sexuality. The orchestral playing is full of verve and colour, though oddly enough, the Bavarian Radio Symphony is also more persuasive in Strauss than in Wagner. **Andrew Farach-Colton**

VERDI

(N)

Simon Boccanegra (original version, 1857)
Sesto Bruscantini bar Simon Boccanegra;
Josella Ligi sop Amelia; André Turp ten
Gabriele; Gwynne Howell bass Fiesco;
William Elvin bass Paolo; Paul Hudson bar
Pietro; BBC Singers and Concert Orchestra
/ John Matheson

Opera Rara (C) (2) ORCV302 (122 minutes: DDD)
Recorded live at the Golders Green Hippodrome,
London and originally broadcast by the BBC
on January 1, 1976

Notes, libretto and translation included

A good case is made for Verdi's first
thoughts, but this early Boccanegra
is probably one for collectors only



Welcome as this is, the first appearance on CD of the original 1857 version of *Boccanegra* – second in Opera Rara's revival of the BBC's 1970s series performing Verdi's first thoughts – serves only to explain why it is so seldom performed in comparison with the glorious 1881 revision. Far more than is the case with *Macbeth* (3/04), Verdi improved, refined and enhanced his original. That was an understandable failure in 1857, Verdi rightly describing it later as 'troppo triste, troppo desolante'.

In a polemic in the accompanying booklet, as lavishly presented and illustrated as that for *Macbeth*, the eminent Verdian scholar Roger Parker attempts a defence of 1857 as being true to its period and more consistent, but, in truth, by the side of 1887 it sounds conventional and sometimes inconsequential. Quite apart from the great Council Chamber scene added for 1887 to replace the rough-hewn finale to the original Act 1, the quite substantial changes made in numbers Verdi retained make all the difference; that is the case in the crucial Act 2 Trio, which Verdi changed subtly into a much more coherent piece, and the same is true of long stretches of the Prologue. Incidentally, it might have been a good idea if Parker had noted such differences for the benefit of purchasers of this set, who instead need to consult Volume 2 of Julian Budden's masterly *The Operas of Verdi* (Cassell: 1978).

Except in one crucial respect, this performance makes as strong a case as possible for the earlier score. Under John Matheson's masterly direction, every aspect of the score is performed with loving care and dramatic verve. That one drawback concerns the performance of the all-important title-part. By the time of this performance Bruscantini was already in his mid-fifties and his voice – never a truly Verdian baritone – sounds dried-out and nasal. He does what he can by his sympathetic understanding of the role and of Verdian style to compensate for this deficiency, but his contribution remains inadequate to the role's many demands.

Patric Schmid, Opera Rara's guru, writes an encomium in the booklet to Bruscantini, but as far as I can see there's nothing about the other singers. Josella Ligi was an Italian soprano who

had a short but distinguished career in the 1970s. Her voice is rich-hued and she sings here with sensitivity and feeling, but her tone hardens under pressure in the upper reaches.

The five supporting male singers were all Covent Garden stalwarts. The French-Canadian tenor André Turp, who was always a presence on stage, is a suitably impassioned Gabriele, delivering his imprecations and love messages with Verdian élan. William Elvin's voice is so strong and incisive that one almost wishes he was singing the title part, particularly as Paolo's role is not so extended as it is in the revised score. Gwynne Howell is, as ever, an appealing and stylish performer, suggesting both Fiesco's implacable opposition to Simone and, later, his remorse. As Pietro, Paul Hudson does much with little.

The BBC Singers and Concert Orchestra enter into the spirit of this darkling score with a will. The live recording has plenty of presence. Applause is reserved for the end of acts. Given its rarity value, this is a recording many Verdians will want to have, though one wonders if tapes exist of Mark Elder's much more recent Covent Garden performance. **Alan Blyth**

Alan Blyth compares all the available recordings of Verdi's opera on page 36

S WAGNER

(N)

Die heilige Linde
John Wegner bar Arbogast; Dagmar Schellenberger sop Hildegard; Ksenija Lukic sop Sigrun; Mechthild Georg mez Gundelind; Thorsten Scharnke ten Fritigern; Adam Kruzel bar Ekhart; A Count; Volker Horn ten Philo; Heinz Heidebüchel ten Caius; Messenger; Katalin Halmai mez Autonoë; Roman Trekel bar Antenor; Soon-Dong Kwon bass Instigator; Josef Otten bass Knight; One of the elders; West German Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Cologne / Werner Andreas Albert

CPO (C) (3) CPO999 844-2 (149 minutes: DDD)

Notes, synopsis, text and translation included

A father's shadow looms large over this convoluted opera



The plot of *Die heilige Linde* defies summary, or even, it appears, synopsis. Though the leading Siegfried Wagner scholar Peter P Pachl contributes elaborate booklet essays on its ideas, the nomenclature of its characters and its very equivocal position as a national opera, he gives no outline of the complicated plot before we plunge into the libretto. This is complete, with a translation that is rather insecure in tone. 'The Nordics are downright nitwits,' exclaims one of the characters: certainly the Germans act with remarkable obtuseness in the face of Italian cunning.

Set in the third century, the opera is a tale of many-layered conspiracy, intrigue, adultery, deception and impersonation involving the attempt of the German tribal chieftain Arbogast to forge an alliance with Rome, abetted by the devious Philo, acting as both political and sexual procurer. It culminates in the planting of a sapling to replace the sacred tree of the title that has been felled at the start, as symbol of the growth of the German nation, complete with invocations of Wotan and Thor.

Such allusions are risky, especially for a composer bearing the name Wagner. Excellently as he scores, and individual as his harmony

can be, Siegfried fails to escape from the shadow of his father in much of the work, especially in the German scenes. Even the Italian Act 2, in which the intention is to suggest a lighter, sunnier manner, does not seem to have moved very far south from Nuremberg's Festwiese and the benign eyes of the Mastersingers.

In Rome, as Philo works his conspiracy to link Autonoë to Arbogast, Volker Horn gets a sinister charm into his voice; Autonoë is charmingly sung by Katalin Halmai, wheedling her way into the arms of the hapless Teuton, bluffly sung by John Wegner. As Antenor, Roman Trekel makes the most of one of the longer and more distinctive arias as he persuades Autonoë to abandon her deceit and return to an honest life as a fisher girl with him in Miletus. Though Dagmar Schellenberger is a little light for the part, she does her best with Hildegard, the betrayed wife of Arbogast, and Thorsten Scharnke deals gracefully with another victim of deceit, the rather characterless Fritigern.

The score is continuous and largely unrhymed until end-rhyme comes into play so as to give the formal numbers the condition of aria; as well as handling the orchestra skilfully, Werner Andreas Albert paces the work so as to make structural sense of these. *Die heilige Linde* is not an easy work, but those who follow the increasing attention given to Siegfried Wagner will find plenty to interest them. **John Warrack**

JOSEPH CALLEJA

(N)

Tenor Arias

Cilea Adriana Lecouvreur – La dolcissima effigie. L'Arlesiana – E la solita storia (Lamento) Donizetti L'elisir d'amore – Quanto è bella. Lucia di Lammermoor – Tombe degli avi miei... Fra poco a me ricovero; Oh meschina; Tu che a Dio spiegasti l'ali Puccini Madama Butterfly – Addio fiorito asil Verdi Macbeth – O figli, o figli miei!... Ah, la paterna mano. Rigoletto – Questa o quella; Ella mi fu rapita... Parmi veder le lagrime; Duca, duca!; Possente amor mi chiama; La donna è mobile. La traviata – Lunge da lei... De' miei bollenti spiriti; O mio rimorso

Joseph Calleja ten with bLydia Easley mez
Giovanni Battista Parodi bar Giuseppe Verdi
Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Milan /
Riccardo Chailly

Decca (C) 475 250-2DH (53 minutes: DDD)

Texts and translations included

A consistently impressive début that adds richness and lustre to the tenor gene pool



You wait for years for a good new tenor and then two arrive at once. Last month Rolando Villazón burst on to the scene with his first recital disc for Virgin Classics, and now Joseph Calleja is planting his flag on the same artistic territory. All but two of the operas Calleja sings from – *Adriana Lecouvreur* and *Madama Butterfly* – were also chosen by Villazón, so the opera world will be buzzing with comparisons.

How different these two young tenors turn out to be. At the tender age of 26, Calleja sounds slighter of voice, with a technique that does not like being pushed to extremes – some of the soft singing in the aria from *L'arlesiana* is worryingly shallow of tone and the high D that ends the *Rigoletto* scene was not a good idea. His very fast vibrato may also disturb some people, though that

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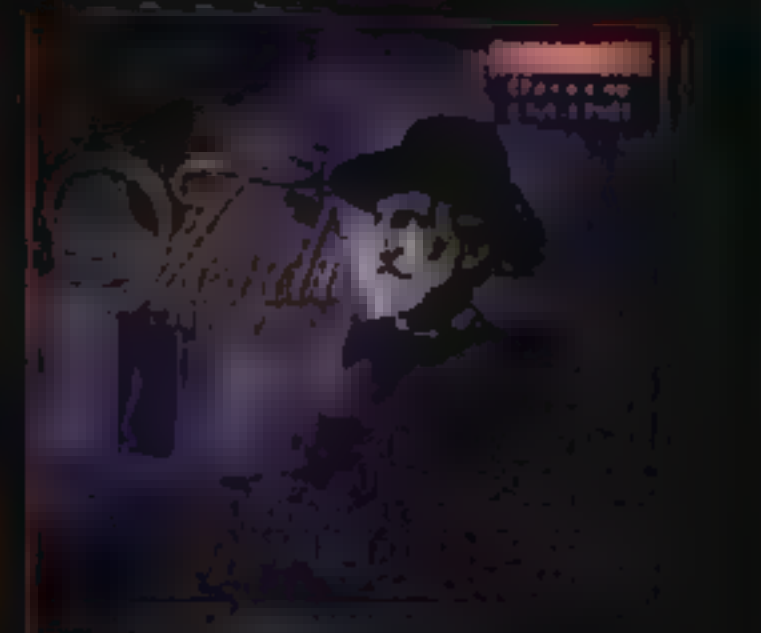


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probably means they are not familiar with tenors of a bygone era, such as De Lucia or Bonci.

This is where the comparisons get interesting. Calleja is said to have an interest in the great tenors of the past and that must be what inspires the *bel canto* elegance of his singing. Compare Villazón and Calleja in *La traviata*: Villazón is firm, musical, decisive; but Calleja goes further, inflecting the music with light and shade, catching the joy of the recitative, the intimacy at 'Qui presso a lei', the tenderness of the *pianissimi*. The aria from *Macbeth* is truly 'con espressione melanconica', as Verdi instructs. His Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* is absolutely winning.

Everywhere the hand of Riccardo Chailly is evident. This extends past the first-rate playing to the detail he demands from Calleja: every dot and dash, every *legato* line is observed, even down to some unusual sanctioned alternatives in the vocal parts (spot the ones in *Rigoletto* and *La traviata*). The performances are lifted to a higher level of artistry. It may be that Villazón has the vocal security and outgoing character to build the bigger career, but as far as these two recital discs are concerned, it is Calleja's that I shall return to more often.

Richard Fairman

The release date for this disc has been delayed until May 10.

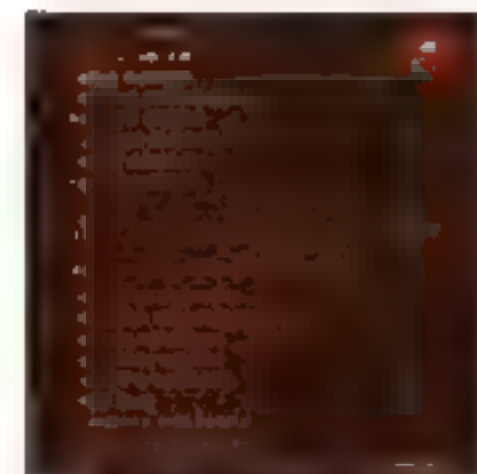
10TH ANNUAL OPERA GALA N

In support of the German AIDS Foundation Arias by **Bizet, Catalani, Dvořák, Giordano, Lehár, Leoncavallo, Massenet, Mozart, Puccini, Saint-Saëns, J Strauss II, R Strauss** and **Wagner**

Artists include **Juliane Banse, Adrienne Pieczonka, Anne Schwanewilms** *sops* **Grace**

Bumbry, Vesselina Kasarova, Angelika Kirchschrager *mezs* **Jochen Kowalski** *counterten* **Charles Castronovo, Salvatore Licitra** *tens* **Markus Brück, Ko Seng Hyoun** *bars* **Paolo Gavanelli, René Pape** *basses*
Chorus and Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper, Berlin / Kent Nagano
RCA Red Seal ⑤ ② 82876 56028-2
(91 minutes: DDD). Recorded live at the Deutsche Oper, Berlin on November 8, 2003

Big occasion, starry names in a good cause



Human inclination and critical duty are slightly at variance here. If the box or introductory notes had stated unequivocally, as may well be true, that the artists had given their services free then it would be churlish to review their performances with anything other than appreciative gratitude; similarly, if all proceeds from sale of the discs were guaranteed to go to the good cause (the German AIDS Foundation), then again one might feel that normal critical scrutiny should be relaxed. But, as far as I can see, these things are not said. The artists are thanked and we are told that 'a contribution from sales' will be made: but that is not quite the same thing.

And so this survey has to start with the observation that Angelika Kirchschrager, who opens the programme, catches nothing of Mozart's Cherubino beyond his notes and words. She sings and enunciates perfectly well, but the play of light and shade, the moods and confidences, are left unrealised. Something of the same has to be said of René Pape's account of the catalogue song in *Don Giovanni*: the notes are there, so are the words, and the voice is magnificent, but

Leporello hardly comes into view. It won't quite do to say that some loss of character is inevitable in this sequence of separate 'numbers', for singers can often illuminate a whole series of characters: not in these instances, however.

Among those who do manage to bring the full operatic context to life, the most impressive is Vesselina Kasarova. She, it's true, has the longest of the extracts; but Charlotte's Letter scene in *Werther* is a genuine dramatic experience. So is Paolo Gavanelli's Prologue to *Pagliacci*. He, rather curiously, declines to provide the satisfaction of those full-voiced upper middle-register notes which Italian baritones usually have in such abundant supply, but he does give full value on the A flat and G and, throughout, brings a personal and meaningful touch to the more-than-familiar solo.

Good things and not so good might be said of the items by other sopranos, tenors and baritones. Adrienne Pieczonka's Song to the Moon deserves mention, and Pape reappears, again in superb voice and with more expression, in the Toreador's song from *Carmen*. But, if it's individual performers we're talking about, the first accolade must surely be reserved for Grace Bumbry. The great moment of the evening comes when at the end of Dalila's 'Mon coeur s'ouvre' she plucks out of the air a lustrous high B flat. Her voice, at 65, is much steadier than, years ago, one might have expected it would be, and its quality is still in the luxury class.

Thrilling, too, is the Opera Chorus in the 'Wach' auf' chorale from *Die Meistersinger*; and exhilarating is the orchestra's playing of the *Thunder and Lightning* Polka, with evident but unidentified sources of additional delight for the enthusiastic audience. It was clearly a great evening, and, one hopes, a proportionately profitable occasion for the cause.

John Steane

A GIRL WITH A CHUCKLE IN HER VOICE - AND THIS SINGER'S HIGH SPIRITS PROVE INFECTIOUS

'French Touch'

Aboulker Vocalise - Je t'aime **Chabrier**
L'Etoile - O petite étoile!; Enfin, je me sens mieux! **Delibes** Les Filles de Cadix - Nous venions de voir le taureau. **Lakmé** - Viens Malika...Dôme épais le jasmim/Sous le dôme épais (Flower Duet)²; Où va la jeune indoue (Bell Song) **Gounod** Roméo et Juliette - Je veux vivre **Hahn** Brummell - Lorsque cet effronté a soudain érupté **Massenet** Cendrillon - Ah! Douce enfant. Manon - Adieu, notre petite table; Je marche sur tous les chemins; Obéissons quand leur voix appelle **Messager** L'amour masqué - J'ai deux amants. Fortunio - Lorsque je n'étais qu'une enfant **Offenbach** Les Contes d'Hoffmann - Les oiseaux dans la charmille; Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour
Patricia Petibon *sop* **Karine Deshayes** *mez*
Lyon National Opera Chorus and Orchestra / Yves Abel
Decca ④ 475 090-2DH (63 minutes: DDD)

Here's a bit of a surprise. Patricia Petibon, usually associated with Baroque and 18th-century music, reveals a robust sense of humour, a facility for *opéra-bouffe*, and the ability to send herself up. Go to track 3 and hear what I mean with her vivid 'J'ai deux amants' from *Messager's L'amour masqué*. Among modern singers, only the late-lamented Graziella Sciutti found so much to do with this harmless little bit of masculine-ego-baiting.

The other 'essential track', as they say in Tin



Pan Alley, is the extract from Reynaldo Hahn's *Brummell*. This isn't the same aria that Susan Graham included in her French operetta disc a couple of years ago, but altogether raunchier couplets in which Lady Eversharp extols all the virtues of the dandyish hero, calling him all the names she can think of - 'Libertin', 'Rustre éhonté', 'Triste goujat' and worse - before admitting that he intoxicates and amazes her. It's worth getting the CD for this track alone, and for Petibon's final riotous encore piece, composed for her by Isabelle Aboulker, 'Je t'aime', a parody of all the soprano mad scenes of the past.

For the rest of the CD, Petibon sticks with the conventional French soprano repertory. Her Juliette is rather strident, then in the *Delibes* group she is better in a high-spirited 'Les filles de Cadix', than in the Bell Song and Flower Duet (with Karine Deshayes) from *Lakmé*, perfectly acceptable performances though both are. In the three *Massenet* arias, it is the scene for the fairy godmother from *Cendrillon* that comes off best. 'Adieu, notre petite table' is overly sentimental, and 'Je marche sur tous les chemins' proves a bit of an effort. Throughout, Petibon's diction is superb, and there is always a sense of character, but she is such a natural comedienne that it's in the arias where she has a chance to laugh that she is at her best. It's always a pleasure to hear music from Chabrier's *L'Etoile* and the sneezing song, 'Enfin je sens mieux', gives her another chance to go slightly too far.



'She's an original': Patricia Petibon

Yves Abel and the Lyon National Orchestra and Chorus provide sterling support. As far as one can tell from the booklet-note, the only one of these roles that Petibon has sung on stage so far is Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. This was in a production by Olivier Py - 'controversial', she calls it - in which the doll had to appear naked all the way through. 'We definitely broke barriers there,' Petibon explains; on disc, when the machinery starts to go wrong, she adds some of the most outrageous funny-voice effects ever heard in this aria. It's all a bit extreme, but as the cover photograph suggests, showing a bewigged Petibon riding on a fairground horse, she's an original.

Patrick O'Connor



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DVD

Klinghoffer in close-up • A starry Glyndebourne gala • A flightless Fledermaus

GIORDANO

R

Andrea Chénier

Plácido Domingo *ten* Andrea Chénier;Anna Tomowa-Sintow *sop* Maddalena;Giorgio Zancanaro *bar* Carlo Gérard;John Dobson *ten* Incrédible; PatriciaJohnson *mez* Contessa de Coigny; CynthiaBuchan *mez* Bersi; Jonathan Summers *bass*Roucher Anny Schlemm *sop* Madélon;Royal Opera House Chorus and Orchestra,
Covent Garden / Julius Rudel

Stage director Michael Hampe

Video director Humphrey Burton

Warner Music Vision/NVC Arts © DVD

5050466 8357-2-7 (112 minutes: Picture format

4:3 NTSC, Sound PCM stereo, Regions 2, 3, 4,

5 and 6)

From Castle Vision CV112058,

recorded 1985

Selected comparison:

Bartoletti (4/03) (HARD) HCD4008

A near-faultless trio of principals
in a fine Covent Garden staging

This 1985 staging of Giordano's most popular opera was one of Covent Garden's finest hours in the 1980s. Michael Hampe's production, though not overly imaginative, set the story in its right milieu and he directed an excellent cast with acuity. Although Julius Rudel's conducting wasn't

much admired at the time, it now seems to me very much in the spirit of the piece.

But the main reasons for acquiring the set are the three principals. Plácido Domingo, at the height of his powers, pours out his rich, well-placed tones unstintingly in solo after solo, and he makes each a part of a vocally impeccable portrayal of the anguished poet and lover, though even then he was looking mature for the role. As his rival for the hand of Maddalena, Giorgio Zancanaro – the most convincing Italian baritone of the time – almost stops the show with his vibrant and emotionally overwhelming account

of 'Nemico della patria'. He graphically depicts a man torn between fierce desires and better instincts. Anna Tomowa-Sintow overcomes the slight drawback of an overly comfy presence through the sincerity of her acting and the Italianate élan of her singing; her 'La mamma morta' is an object lesson in style.

Apart from Anny Schlemm's wobbly Madélon, the smaller roles are well filled with British stalwarts of the day. The orchestral playing is admirable throughout. Humphrey Burton's video direction is perceptive, and the sound satisfactory without being as well-balanced as it might be today. The supporting material is disgracefully thin for a full-price issue.

I gave Bruno Bartoletti's set on Hardy, from an Italian TV relay of 1973, a hearty welcome when it appeared on DVD (4/03). It has Franco Corelli, Piero Cappuccilli and the underrated Celestina Casapietra at their best. Another worthy performance, from La Scala, also an NVC set, is still only on VHS. It boasts a more pointed staging, but I would still go, all things considered, for this new release.

Alan Blyth

THE DRAMA IS GRIPPING BUT IT DOES SERVE TO SHOW UP SHORTCOMINGS IN ADAMS'S MUSIC

The Death of Klinghoffer

Sanford Sylvan *bar* Klinghoffer ChristopherMaltman *bar* Captain Yvonne Howard *mez*Marilyn Klinghoffer Tom Randle *ten* MolqiKamel Boutros *bar* Mamoud Leigh Melrose*bar* Rambo Emil Marwa *act* Omar (sung bySusan Bickley *mez*) London Symphony

Chorus and Orchestra / John Adams

Video director Penny Woolcock

Includes a 'Making of...' documentary

Decca © DVD 074 189-9 (166 minutes: DDD;

NTSC; Picture format 16:9, Sound PCM stereo

and 5.1, Region D)



Klinghoffer has yet to be performed in the US, and Penny Woolcock's live-action film, shot on location – first shown in 2002 on Britain's Channel 4 – won't do much to quieten the controversies that have kept it off the stage. She does flesh out the opera's philosophies, inas-

much as the composer conducted and discussed production details with Woolcock, and was thereby at least complicit in the choice of images. *Klinghoffer* is more an oratorio than an opera, and she uses the choruses and non-dramatic stretches to fill out the characters with flashbacks to 1940s Palestine and even historical footage of Nazi Germany.

This is Adams's slowest stage piece, and Woolcock's close, hand-held camera work severely tests the singers' acting, particularly when they are not singing: the main characters

react more with the face than they act with the voice. What's more, the singers were actually recorded live during the on-location filming, after the orchestra was recorded. The payoff is immense: synchronisation is perfect, and what we hear goes believably with what we see. Even in these trying circumstances, the vocalism and acting are outstanding. Christopher Maltman and Tom Randle, in particular, improve on their counterparts in the Nonesuch studio recording. (They also figure in the alternate track of director's commentary.)

So, does the film show librettist Alice Goodman and stage director Peter Sellars's scenario to be anti-Semitic and sympathetic to terrorism, as some of its American critics claim? The film does round out the terrorists' characters: one vomits after Leon Klinghoffer's shooting, another is caught with a tear rolling down his cheek. But there is a balanced portrayal, showing the good and the bad, of both Jews and Palestinians. The terrorists show regret after the killing, but there is also a stoning where a Palestinian mob gets drunk on its own brutality. Some of the Jewish tourists are parodies early on, but Marilyn Klinghoffer comes to take on towering dignity and strength. In all, Woolcock convinces me that those who have criticised the politics are responding more to what they want to see (or criticise) in the opera than what is actually there.

Such questions aside, is the *opera* any good? The video does nothing to assure me of its musical worth. Even after repeated hearings, not one bar sticks in the memory. The harmonic vocabulary is the most pedestrian of just about any new music heard in the past 20 years. Though Penny Woolcock has cut some of Adams's choruses to streamline the narrative, we are still left with a gaping chasm between the dramatic, close-up



Sanford Sylvan and Yvonne Howard struggle with the brute reality at the heart of Adams's opera

immediacy of the film and the glacial speed of event in Adams's music. At the climax of Marilyn's final *cri de coeur*, Adams suddenly jacks up the expressive range of the music by cutting to 'minimalist' repetition – accompanied by Yvonne Howard's heart-rending performance – but this comes across as a simplistic compositional move. Where Reich or Glass use repetition as a form-building device, Adams instates it to prop up his sagging dramaturgy.

'The prosaic extinguishing of Klinghoffer' was how critic Kyle Gann retitled the opera. Woolcock has turned it into a fairly gripping visual drama, and in a sense her success shows up the musical deficiencies: encountered as an opera rather than a film, *Klinghoffer's* interest goes no further than its topicality.

Arved Ashby

John Adams talks to Andrew Farach-Colton about creating an opera from a modern tragedy on page 10

A STARRY NIGHT UNDER SUMMER SUSSEX SKIES MARKS A PIVOTAL MOMENT IN A GREAT OPERA HOUSE'S HISTORY

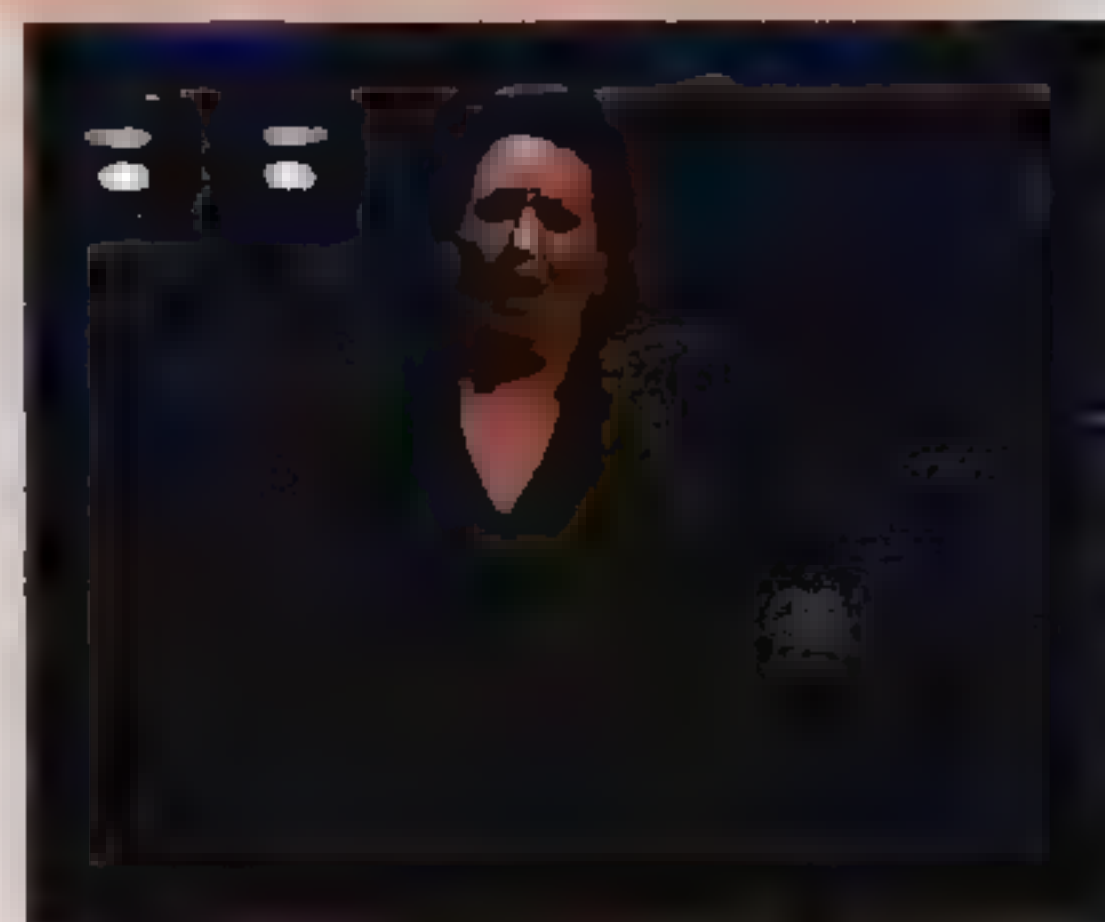
Britten Peter Grimes – Interlude (Storm)
Gershwin Porgy and Bess – Summertime^b
Monteverdi Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria – Illustratevi, o Cielid^f
Mozart Don Giovanni – Là ci darem la mano^{bg}. Idomeneo – Nettuno s'onori!^h Le nozze di Figaro – Overture; Voi che sapete^d
Rossini Il barbiere di Siviglia – Una voce poco fa^d; La calunnia è un venticello^g
R Strauss Capriccio – Kein Andres, das mir so im Herzen loht^c
Stravinsky The Rake's Progress – Ruin, disaster, shame^{ch}
Verdi Macbeth – Patria oppressa!^{eh}
 Otello^a – Salce, Salce; Ave Maria
^aMontserrat Caballé, ^bCynthia Haymon, ^cFelicity Lott ^{sops} ^dFrederica von Stade ^{mez} ^eKim Begley ^{ten} ^fBenjamin Luxon, ^gRuggero Raimondi ^{basses} ^hGlyndebourne Chorus; London Philharmonic Orchestra / Sir Andrew Davis, Bernard Haitink
 Stage director Stephen Lawless
 Video director Christopher Swann
 ArtHaus Musik © DVD 100 432 (112 minutes: Picture format 4:3, Sound PCM stereo, Regions 2 and 5). Recorded live at Glyndebourne Theatre on July 24, 1992

The date was July 24, 1992 (though as far as the booklet, box and announcements are concerned that seems to have been a closely guarded secret). The occasion was a fund-raising gala in the presence of the Prince of Wales: a farewell to the theatre in which opera



had been given at Glyndebourne since the opening season of 1934. Sir George Christie, an urbane Master of Ceremonies, conceded that it was 'a moment of some nostalgia'; and so it will be for many who watch this DVD and have fond memories revived. Philip Hope-Wallace used to say that attending an opera in that auditorium was like living in a match-box with a bumble-bee. But most of us were fond of it; and going back to it now, in picture and imagination, endears the place further.

The evening was well managed. Major successes are recalled, partly in the list of programmed works and composers, partly in the artists taking part. Some of them – Elisabeth Söderström, Janet Baker and Geraint Evans – are there only to speak, and all do so very effectively. The musical highpoint comes with Felicity Lott singing the closing scene from *Capriccio*, Bernard Haitink conducting with undemonstrative skill and affection. Memorable, too, is the reconciliation scene from *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, with Janet Baker recalling this most moving climax to Peter Hall's production, and Frederica von Stade, opposite Benjamin Luxon, recreating her own lovely performance of years ago. It's always good to see Ruggero Raimondi, and his account of



Montserrat Caballé in full voice at Glyndebourne

Don Basilio's slander song is something to watch as well as hear. Montserrat Caballé returned (hiring a private jet so as to be back in Barcelona to fulfil her duties at the Olympics): her solo from *Otello*, conducted by Andrew Davis is sung with marvellous control, though the slow tempo, always seeming about to get slower, weakens the cohesion and underlying tension of the scene. Due tributes are paid to chorus and orchestra, all richly deserved. The film crew must also take a share of the credit. The whole video has been carefully supervised, with no time wasted, and a few occasions found to roam round the garden, catch the light fading on the walls of the house, and see the night sky lit up with celebratory fireworks. **John Steane**

J STRAUSS II

N

Die Fledermaus
 Pamela Armstrong ^{sop} Rosalinde; Lyubov Petrova ^{sop} Adele; Sir Thomas Allen ^{bar} Eisenstein; Pär Lindskog ^{ten} Alfred; Håkan Hagegård ^{bar} Doctor Falke; Malena Ernman ^{mez} Prince Orlofsky; Artur Korn ^{bar} Frank; Ragnar Ulfung ^{ten} Doctor Blind; Renée Schüttengruber ^{sop} Ida; Udo Samel ^{spkr} Frosch; Glyndebourne Chorus; London Philharmonic Orchestra / Vladimir Jurowski
 Stage director Stephen Lawless
 Video director Francesca Kemp
 BBC/Opus Arte © DVD OA0889D (196 minutes: Picture format 16:9, Sound PCM Stereo, DTS 5.1, Region 0). Extra features include cast interviews, 'The Genesis of Waltz', Cast and Costume Design Gallery, 'The Building and Architecture of Glyndebourne's New Opera House'

Selected comparisons:

C Kleiber (9/01) (DG) 073 007-9GH
 Domingo (12/03) (NVC) 4509-99216-2

Splendid conducting and superior packaging can't enliven a dull production

This is a beautifully produced and recorded DVD, the image glowing, the soundtrack, in stereo and DTS surround only, crisply clear. Opus Arte provides interesting extras to compensate for the awkward extension to a second disc. If this seems to start with the externals, though, it's because there's less excellence within.



This production, Glyndebourne's first ever *Fledermaus*, was widely disliked in performance, and video offers little improvement. Not that the staging is a travesty, like Hans Neuenfels' drug-and-incest-addled Salzburg version (ArtHaus, 7/03) – nothing so striking. Stephen Lawless offers a fairly conventional update to the late *Jugendstil* era, in Benoit Dugardyn's rotating set, based on the zigzag gold stripes of a champagne label. This just about works until we get to the jail scene, which is scarcely suggested, and with amateurish effect.

Lawless, moreover, rewrites the dialogue with leaden indifference to wit and timing, padding it out with feeble jokes which are not improved by being retranslated into German, delivered by mostly non-German singers and hammered home with the lumpen insistence that bedevils the action. And while some of his ideas sound promising – Adele shy and victimised instead of pert, Orlofsky's party starting very formal and only gradually hotting up – in practice they deaden the effect further. The result is as stale and sparkle-free as morning-after champagne.

This is a shame, because although the musical side isn't perfect, there's still a lot of brio. Pamela Armstrong is a first-rate Rosalinde, soaring through the Czárdas with steely virtuosity and more charm than Lawless's strident characterisation allows. Likewise, Lyubov Petrova's creamy-voiced Adele, much too reticent compared to the

delightful Hildegard Heichele on the Covent Garden recording. Malena Ernman is a fine Orlofsky, lighter-voiced than Brigitte Fassbaender on Kleiber's classic DVD, but elegant and, with a Grieg-like moustache, unusually convincing – until she's made to reveal herself as a woman, to Adele's understandable dismay.

The men are not so good, however. Thomas Allen's experienced Eisenstein sounds sadly somewhat tired in the tenor range and looks too old for such antics, especially in Lawless's grumpy characterisation. Håkan Hagegård is equally lacklustre as Falke, his genial persona reduced to an alienated old Dr Mabuse-style intriguer. Almost as creepy is Pär Lindskog's passionless Alfred; one can't imagine any woman aroused by this pallid delivery. That characterful bass Artur Korn makes half the impact he could as Frank, as to does veteran Ragnar Ulfung (in an inappropriate British barrister's wig!). DVD renders Frosch's obtrusive champagne monologue mercifully optional.

Which leaves Vladimir Jurowski's conducting. And sadly, in the wake of much else, this is brilliant. Clearly he reveres the score, delivering wit and waltzes with the idiomatic *Schwung* that evades Domingo, for all his sprightliness, at Covent Garden, and, with some superb orchestral playing, a clarity of texture to rival Kleiber.

Jurowski sounds a little richer, Kleiber somewhat crisper, but these are mere shades. What counts is that Kleiber and Domingo both boast superior casts and much better stagings, particularly Covent Garden's cheerful polyglot romp. Either is greatly preferable. **Michael Scott Rohan**

DVD REGION, PICTURE FORMAT & SOUND CODING

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REPLAY

Rob Cowan on three mid-century maestros and a trio of fiddlers

Three rostrum firebrands

Last year's birth centenary celebrations for Yevgeny Mravinsky yielded surprisingly little in the way of interesting local CD reissues, EMI's Great Conductors package being a notable if variable exception. I had never thought of Mravinsky in terms of any particular Golden Year and yet Scribendum's four-disc set of live recordings from the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory – it's called **Mravinsky in Moscow 1965** – attests to exalted standards of both playing, by the Leningrad PO, and interpretation.

Some performances have already enjoyed UK release, most notably a svelte but powerful Sibelius Seventh and *Swan of Tuonela*, a refined yet fairly ferocious Shostakovich Sixth, Hindemith's *Die Harmonie der Welt* (very raw-sounding but artfully shaped), Honegger's *Liturgique* (Third) Symphony and Bartók's *Music for strings, percussion and celesta*. Both are fine examples of the famously dynamic Leningrad strings, as is Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*. Other recordings have surfaced either on Melodiya LPs or subsequent CD series devoted to Mravinsky, including Stravinsky's *Apollon Musagète* with its smoothed contours and gently swinging 'Apotheosis', Mozart No 39 and *Figaro* Overture, swift and lightweight, almost ethereal at times. The Glinka *Ruslan and Ludmilla* that opens the set is the earliest and certainly the fastest version we have from Mravinsky (infinitely more gripping than the 1981 version on Erato) and there are the miniatures by Liadov, Mussorgsky, Glazunov (a matchless performance of *Raymonda's* Third Act Entr'Acte) and Wagner. Scribendum claims that the two performances of *The Ride of the Valkyries* and the Third Act Prelude to *Lohengrin* both date from 1965 (February 23 and 26). But according to the extraordinarily comprehensive Mravinsky discography on the web (<http://plaza19.mbn.or.jp/~yemravinsky/discography.htm>), there was only ever one of each in that year – from February 23.



Mravinsky is celebrated in 1965 recordings with his Leningrad Philharmonic

They are definitely different, the *Lohengrin* Prelude from February 26 has a slightly flat clarinet leading back from the middle to the rocketing outer section while the *Ride* from Feb 23 has better played, and rather better balanced, horns. Both outstrip even Toscanini for lightness in flight, and add a further touch of fizz to a remarkable set, nicely transferred.

Another *Ride* – even swifter than Mravinsky though less intense – opens a valuable if rather claustrophobic-sounding Urania disc of early 1950s American Columbia (CBS) recordings featuring the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. It is called **The Fabulous Philadelphians** and for your money you also get a well-drilled but truncated *Magic Fire Music* and a warmly honed Sibelius *Swan of Tuonela*. Also a rather brash *Boléro*, a breezy and virtuosic Debussy *Ibéria* (with brilliant woodwind interjections near the start of 'Le matin d'un jour de fête') and, most interesting of all, Prokofiev's Seventh Symphony in what was surely its first Western recording (Nikolai Malko's Philharmonia version is from two years later). Ormandy's performance is powerful and beautifully played, on a par I would say with his later versions of the Fifth and Sixth, with prominent

THE RECORDINGS

Mravinsky in Moscow 1965
Scribendum Ⓢ Ⓢ SC031

The Fabulous Philadelphians
Ormandy
Urania/Priority Ⓢ URN22.249

Sibelius Koussevitzky
Naxos Ⓢ 8 110168

brass and well-focused timps. I was sorry he opted for the rowdy 'alternative' ending but the way he finishes off – with an abrupt wallop – makes partial amends.

On his stereo CBS recording of Sibelius's Seventh Ormandy, like Mravinsky and Serge Koussevitzky, 'brightened' the final chord with an added trumpet line. Some still baulk at the gesture but there can be few who deny that Koussevitzky's live 1933 Seventh with the BBC Symphony Orchestra is among the most devastating symphonic statements committed to disc, the final climax more noble and heroic than on any rival recording. Ward Marston's transfer for Naxos is one of the cleanest we have, the couplings, all with the Boston Symphony, a whirlwind *Tapiola*, an extremely dramatic *Pohjola's Daughter*, 'The Maiden with the Roses' from *Swanwhite* and Grieg's *The Last Spring*.

With strings attached

Comparing live with studio can be a fascinating business, especially in the case of string quartets where mood and the dynamic of team relationships can vary from day to day. It's many years now since I heard the Hungarian Quartet's mono Columbia LP of Schubert's G major Quartet D887, though their 1968 stereo remake was recently reissued by EMI as part of a cheap Gemini double-pack (585526-2). Orfeo has released a third option, recorded (in mono) live at the 1961 Salzburg Festival. There are few significant differences between the '61 and '68 versions, save for a tendency to rush live which gives the same classically grounded interpretation an added touch of impetus. Still, I recall that the mono studio version was more gripping than either (one for Testament, perhaps?). Orfeo's coupling is Bartók's Fifth Quartet, nearer this time at least in terms of vintage to its stereo studio counterpart (DG) though a combination of resonant sound and sketchy ensemble rather vitiates against the live newcomer.

Naxos's second volume of **Encores and Transcriptions** featuring Pablo Casals finds Mark Obert-Thorn drawing what he can from some variable originals. The eloquence of Casals's playing, wistfully sighing as ever, transcends even the heaviest surfaces and transforms a plethora of varied miniatures, be they transcriptions of Bach (probably the best items on the programme) or Sgambati's sentimental Serenade. Interesting that Obert-Thorn adds Beethoven's *Coriolan* Overture in a powerful 1927 Kingsway Hall recording by the LSO under Casals, a performance not often reissued.

The newly rejuvenated Biddulph label has released an all-Bach programme by Zino Francescatti from 1950-53, opening with a taut, lavishly expressed performance of the E major Violin Concerto BWV1042 with the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell. Francescatti's fulsome tone and sovereign technical command never preclude a sense of style, though the two unaccompanied

Partitas that are also included – the E major and D minor – are if anything even more impressive. Few recordings of the D minor Chaconne parade such a sure, steady sense of forward momentum, shamelessly romantic but consistent to the last and rhythmically rock-solid.

Also from Biddulph, a second new release – of Bach and Handel – that couldn't provide a greater contrast with Francescatti. It too includes a Bach E major Concerto, this one from 20 years earlier with **Mischa Elman** and an orchestra under Lawrence Collingwood. It's marginally broader than Francescatti's but with a doleful, warm-hearted and laid-back tone that was Elman's special quality, full-bodied but unforced and with a sobbing 'catch' to the vibrato that marks it out as unique. The couplings include a free-wheeling Prelude from the E major Partita, a sumptuous Handel 'Largo' (with Herbert Dawson at the organ) and three gently romanticised Handel sonatas (Op 1 Nos 3, 13 and 15) plus a Gavotte from a Suite in G. All are from 1949-50 and are with Wolfgang Rosé at the piano.

As it happens a similar account of Handel's Op 1 No 4 also turns up in the second of two Testament four-CD boxes that chronicle Elman's brief Decca

sojourn, most of the material having been locally unavailable for years. Paul Bailly has done a brilliant job with the sound, honouring the full lustre of the orchestral sessions, superbly done in the case of Sir Adrian Boult's sterling accompaniments for Wieniawski, Tchaikovsky and Bruch. So interesting to compare Elman (in his mid-sixties by the time these recordings were made) with another fêted student of Leopold Auer, Jascha Heifetz. Where the technically impeccable Heifetz (also taped in the early 1950s) is swift, vibrant, tightly wired and aggressive, Elman is gentle, mercurial, utterly elastic in his phrasing, his vibrato markedly less intense than Heifetz's, his command of the instrument fairly thorough if less dazzlingly comprehensive. A Bruch First Concerto under Boult is loved but laboured whereas the Second under Anatole Fistoulari, although less tough and less bang in tune than Heifetz, has a plangent, ruminating quality that perfectly suits Fistoulari's epic statement of the orchestral score. The passage in the finale where those strange opening reveilles return is full of nostalgia, Elman sounding deeply immersed, much as he does in the first movement of Wieniawski's Second Concerto. Here, in addition to a full roster of Wieniawski's orchestral *tutti*s

(most others cut them, including Heifetz) we gain extra insight into the soul of a concerto that is too often 'thrown off' as a mere fiddler's showcase.

The Tchaikovsky Concerto is fascinating in that, as an interpretation, its broader outlines are similar to Elman's pre-war set under Barbirolli. I would cite as common to both his rapturous playing of the first movement's second subject and numerous departures in tempo from the straight and narrow, something that on occasion seems to have fazed Boult rather more than it did Barbirolli. Still, if it's a molten tone you're after then the earlier version (now on Naxos) is the one to go for.

Other concertos include the already reissued Beethoven under Solti, with Elman's own extravagant cadenzas and some saucy swoops in the finale, and Mozart, the Fourth and Fifth Concertos, light years removed from the kind of rigidity that once passed as 'Classical' style. Try the finales to either and Elman's obvious affection for the music, his artful *rubato* and chuckling 'chutzpah' cannot but help prompt a smile. Then, again, maybe not. Maybe the stylistic anachronisms will prove too much, the vulnerable patches in Elman's playing (and there are some) test the patience. Three solo works stray from the

duo-sonata set, Vitali's Chaconne (in Charlier's arrangement), Werner Josten's delightful Sonatina of 1939 (a gorgeous central movement) and Korngold's *Much Ado About Nothing* Suite, the highlight there being a meltingly affecting 'Garden Scene'. The rest of the duo material, all with Elman's competent pianist Joseph Seiger very much in tow, include Beethoven's *Spring* and *Kreutzer* Sonatas, the former affable and relaxed from the start, the latter charmingly 'old-world' but a little underpowered. Elman's accounts of the Franck and Fauré (First) Sonatas incorporate some unusually broad tempi, especially in the first movements and the second movement of the Fauré, but no one could complain at a lack of thoughtfulness, or sensuousness, or indeed musical breathing space. Like Menuhin on his roughly contemporaneous recordings of the Grieg sonatas, Elman's accounts of Nos 1 and 3 are among his happiest records from the period, fresh and spontaneous, and with precisely the right kind of sentiment. His Brahms is more compelling in the songful A major than in the dramatically charged D minor, though both include many heart-rending passages. And there are the encores, which for many were Elman's special province, in this case Kreisler, Mendelssohn, Dvořák, Wieniawski, Sammartini, Smetana, Espéjo, Benjamin, Bach, Charles Miller and Elman himself, cameo flash-backs to a period when to be a musician meant to bare your soul unconditionally. And soul is something that Elman had in abundance.

Assessing these invaluable sets in relation to other violin reissues is difficult. Those in search of a single-disc sampling of Elman's art, an 'Elman Starter-pack' if you will, are advised to try either the Biddulph Bach/Handel CD or the Naxos transfer of the Tchaikovsky (although Elman's earlier Wieniawski Second is less affecting than the version reissued here). But I can't imagine that anyone who appreciates violin playing 'from the heart' will fail to respond at least to a measure of what is on offer here.

As so often these days, we are very much in Testament's debt. ●



THE RECORDINGS

Schubert, Bartók
Hungarian Qt
Orfeo/Chandos © C6040318

Encores and Transcriptions,
Volume 2 Casals
Naxos © 8 110976

Bach Francescatti
Biddulph © 80207-2

Bach, Handel Elman
Biddulph © 80206-2

Mischa Elman plays
concertos, etc
Testament © 4 SBT1343

Mischa Elman plays
sonatas and encores
Testament © 4 SBT1344

'Doleful, warm-hearted and laid-back tone' – unique characteristics of Mischa Elman's violin playing

DELPHIAN 2004

www.delphianrecords.co.uk
coming in 2004 from
the label in the festival city...

2004 is an exciting year for Delphian. Spring sees the release of the much-anticipated recording of Richard Allain's music featuring the National Youth Choir of Great Britain, chamber choir **Laudibus** and saxophonist John Harle. **Concerto Caledonia** and **David McGuinness** explore Scottish music from the eighteenth century.

Summer releases include Delphian's first recording with the **Exon Singers** under **Matthew Owens**, featuring a newly-published reconstruction of **Tomás Luis de Victoria's** music for the *Second Vespers of the Feast of the Annunciation*. Owens and the **Choir of St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh**, follow their highly-acclaimed Delphian releases with ■

recording surveying the choral, vocal and organ music of **Gabriel Jackson**, featuring soprano **Helen Meyerhoff**. At the organ, Owens will release the first in Delphian's series of the complete organ works of **Johann Pachelbel**.

Summer also sees a centenary disc of **Luigi Dallapiccola's** music, encompassing ■ wide-ranging selection of his songs, featuring soprano **Susan Hamilton**, and instrumental music, including the complete original piano works, played by **David Wilde** (famed pupil of **Nadia Boulanger** and winner of the **Budapest Liszt/Bartok** competition).

The complete piano works of the late **Kenneth Leighton**, will be recorded by his long-time student,

Angela Brownridge. The three-disc recording will be available before winter 2004.

Two of the UK's finest keyboard interpreters, **John Butt** and **John Kitchen**, have been surveying original **Willis and Lewis** organs in Glasgow for a disc that will document them in an end-of-year release.

Want to hear more? Visit **Delphian's** website for more details and a full catalogue online. There you can enter your email details and enrol to receive Delphian's monthly newsletter. Delphian operates a subscriber series which currently offers the whole back-catalogue for £69. Log on for more details: www.delphianrecords.co.uk



■ **Paix du Parnasse** - DCD34012
Lucy Carolan & John Kitchen,
harpsichords

A lively programme of music for two harpsichords by the French master **François Couperin**, given on the 1769 Taskin and the 1764/83 Germans/Taskin double-manual instruments from the Russell Collection of Early Keyboards.

Fine rapport between this duo produces a disc that cannot fail to give pleasure - *Gramophone*



Ascension
Choir of ■ **Mary's Cathedral,**
Edinburgh; **Matthew Owens**

A Choral Evensong ■ contemporary works comprising **Leighton's** responses and premiere recordings of works by **James MacMillan** and **Richard Allain**, leading up to **Messiaen's** meditative organ work *L'Ascension*.

The choir sing with tremendous fervour, clarity and power...
...worth buying for the **MacMillan** alone. - *Gramophone*



A's Gowden Lyric:
Songs by **Ronald Stevenson**
Susan Hamilton, soprano
John Cameron, piano

The lyric Scots poetry of **Hugh MacDiarmid**, **Sorley MacLean**, and **William Soutar** and **Robert Louis Stevenson's** *A Child's Garden* ■ Verses are featured in this premiere recording of songs by composer **Ronald Stevenson**.

Hamilton's is an astonishingly pure voice... The recording is beautifully balanced and clear as a bell. Anyone interested in the composer, the poets, the singer, in twentieth-century British song generally, should buy this disc. - *International Record Review*

the usher hall organ john kitchen



John Kitchen, **Edinburgh's City Organist**, presents an eclectic programme of music brilliantly brought to life on the **Usher Hall's** newly-refurbished monumental **Norman and Beard** concert organ: never before heard on disc.

"That excellent player **John Kitchen**... is all one could wish for"

- *International Record Review*



Usher Hall Organ - DCD34022
Release Date: **May 17, 2004**

the kelvingrove organ timothy byram-wigfield



The Kelvingrove Organ - DCD34004
Now available

Timothy Byram-Wigfield, newly appointed **Director of Music** at **St George's Chapel, Windsor**, plays a variety of **Edwardian** transcriptions on one of the world's finest concert organs: the **Lewis organ** in **Glasgow's Kelvingrove Gallery**.



Timothy Byram-Wigfield
The Lewis Organ
Release Date: **May 17, 2004**

Take Five

Fabrice Fitch reaches for the aspirin after some American headbangers

Each in their own way (or very nearly so), these five discs bear out the truth behind that old cliché about the influence of the 'wide open spaces' on America's cultural consciousness. Bound up in this sense of scale is a concern with the re-examination of musical space, a formal radicalism that transcends stylistic concerns. Questions of musical space and scale most obviously dominate Morton Feldman's late works: as Peter Dickinson pointed out in his original review, the chamber works for clarinet in different combinations are slender, almost tiny in comparison to other score's from this period. On the other hand, certain sonorities arising from the combined instruments (particularly in Bass Clarinet and Percussion) are so striking that one perfectly understands Feldman's wish to show them off. The most ambitious is the 40-minute Clarinet and String Quartet, whose scoring can hardly help but call to mind a Romantic idiom. It may seem obvious in hindsight, but I was startled to detect fleeting but unmistakable reminiscences of Brahms. Other than that, Feldman's world here is so much his own that one can only really comment on the performances, which do everything that the composer might have required of them.

A similar sense of musical time conceived in terms of a broad canvas pervades the recording of John Cage's *Sixty-Eight*, completed in the year of Cage's death. In his review PD described it as 'filler' on a bill that includes the more famous Concerto for Prepared Piano and Orchestra, and said no more about it. To my mind this is unjust, for this final stage of Cage's experimentation

with chance yields moments of unexpected pathos. It has a character all its own, and a sense of disembodied space that is quite haunting. As for the Concerto, I would hardly argue with PD's preference for the ECM recording; but I'd reiterate that *Sixty-Eight* is worth hearing for its own sake. As to the audience's 'noises off', these are admittedly a distraction, but they seem to have got to me less than they affected my colleague. (On the other hand, I agree with him about the conductor's spiral-bound score: you can't do anything about audience coughs, but this is a different matter.)

Written a decade after Cage's, Elliott Carter's Piano Concerto subjects the interaction of soloist and orchestra (the 'basic concept of the concerto') to 'penetrating critical scrutiny', as Arnold Whittall remarked. (To my mind, that scrutiny is rather more searching than Cage's.) While I'd also agree that the performance (by soloist Mark Wait and the Nashville Symphony Orchestra) could have made more of the work's dramatic potential, the very fact that Naxos continues to offer the productions of the avant-garde is itself a radical gesture, highly to be welcomed. This particular programme is also instructive in that it gives the lie to the advocates of that depressing 'can't draw, won't draw' theory of modern art. That Carter can write good tunes (and cook up an orchestral barnstorm, if you'll forgive the mixed metaphor) is convincingly demonstrated by the accompanying Symphony No 1 and the *Holiday Overture*. These works of Carter's early period partake of the patriotic idiom common to many of his contemporaries. In such cases the relation to 'open spaces' is perhaps more a

matter of evocation than a subject of critical enquiry. To be honest, I had approached these works in a spirit of 'filler'; well, more fool me. I hope that people who find modernism difficult will take these pieces as a token of their composer's craftsmanship, integrity and musicianship, and dare themselves to trust him in the more 'challenging' idiom he embraced so soon after. Writing as consummately and engagingly as this, how much courage must it have taken Carter to embark on new territory?

Journeying through those 'wide open spaces' is the subject of Harry Partch's *US Highball*, a 'semi-autobiographical' account of Partch's journey from California to Chicago. This version (arranged for Kronos by Partch's pupil Ben Johnston) transmogrifies the work into a precursor of another string quartet journey,

(and inconceivable without) the sound of a feedback-riven electric guitar. It's true that Partch made several arrangements of the work himself, but certainly not for classical chamber ensembles of any traditional guise. Philosophical questions aside, I found the performance over-earnest, lacking in the humour that Partch must have seen in his experiences: the libretto's deliberate repetitions become merely tedious. Creative irritants are an indispensable part of a vibrant culture, but I doubt whether this is the form of irritation that Partch had in mind.

I saved Milton Babbitt's collection of chamber works till last, simply because it doesn't lend itself so easily to the theme of space and journeying (the title of one of these works, borrowed from Machaut, *My Ends are my Beginnings*, is as close as you get).

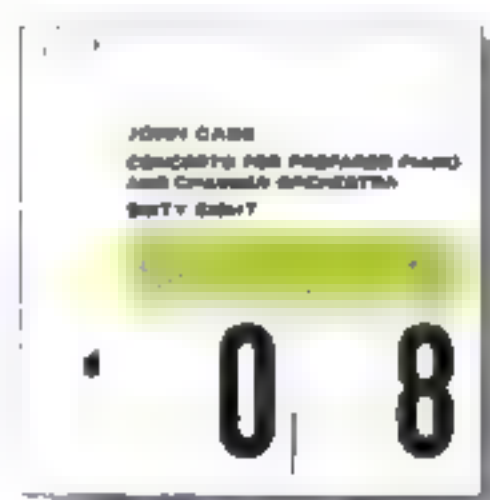
'Babbitt's work is usually held up as difficult, but I found most of this music sunny and relaxed'

Steve Reich's *Different Trains*. As a piece of concert programming it is undoubtedly inspired (Kronos like to perform both together), but where the use of the string quartet is integral to Reich's conception, it seems quite alien to Partch's. Setting up the string quartet as the symbol of a culture that sent people to their deaths in their millions is a powerful (even radical) gesture, but the aestheticization of Partch's quirky brand of radicalism makes me rather uneasy. It is as though the work had been de-clawed, dressed up and made respectable, in the same way that the Kronos cover of Jimi Hendrix's *Purple Haze* dresses up a work whose 'notes' are really inseparable from

Babbitt's work is usually held up as an example of modernism deliberately being difficult. There is a hint of this attitude, perhaps, in Ken Smith's review, and so I may as well say that I found most of this music remarkably sunny and relaxed. My own favourite is *Manifold Music* for organ, whose repeated notes make it sound admirably suited to transcription on the barrel organ. It tootles along quite chirpily, and has a suitably weird counterpart in the disc's cover art, which has a disconcerting 'play-school' look about it. These are occasional pieces, and not all of them struck me quite as distinctively as the organ piece; but they certainly make for a lively recital. ●



Feldman
mode Ⓔ
mode119 (12/03)



Cage
col legno Ⓔ
WWE1CD20088 (4/04)



Carter
Naxos Ⓢ
■ 559151 (3/04)



Partch
Nonesuch Ⓢ
7559 79697-2 (12/03)



Babbitt
Bridge Ⓔ
BRIDGE9135 (2/04)

Books

The 'real' John Tavener revealed, a memoir of the private Shostakovich and Ireland's most important 20th-century composer profiled

LIFTING THE VEIL: THE BIOGRAPHY OF SIR JOHN TAVENER

BY PIERS DUDGEON

Portrait, 270pp, HB, £20
ISBN 0-7499-5003-X



born in 1944, John Tavener is now 60 years of age, almost venerable and certainly eligible for biography. Here, the biographer divides his life into three parts, the first ending with a car-crash and a stroke, following the dissatisfactions generated by his opera *Thérèse* and by elements in his personal life. Beginning then in 1980, Part Two records a decade of artistic achievement largely associated with an Orthodox nun, Mother Thekla; it also involves several intense relationships, amatory, intellectual and spiritual. At the end of it, Tavener has won fame and has found (or been found by) a younger woman, whom he marries and whose presence in his life is one cause of his dissociation from the monastery, taking up instead the teachings of mystics and religious thinkers from all over the world (except the Church of England). The most recent enquiries find the composer, as he says, 'drawing into myself much more', 'looking for the answer' and certain of one thing essential to himself: 'The purpose of my life is to write music'.

That might seem to set a strict limitation but in fact is rather too inclusive: his purpose is to write music of a certain kind, and the story of his life has been one of exploration to determine what that kind is. His mind is religious and philosophical (he is 'our foremost musical metaphysicist'). He likes symbols and has been attracted by the ikons of the Orthodox Church. Musically, development following in the line of earlier 20th-century

British composers seems out of the question, but 'modernism' too is rejected. The construction of 'clever-made carpets of complexity', and the work of Harrison Birtwistle in particular, are totally alien to what he is 'about'. This is eventually defined as 'the idea that behind the diversities of this world there must be an ultimate unity', which he calls 'Eros'. The music is to express, or perhaps realise and enforce this: for, as the author puts it, 'The artistic process is to make the individual universal, the subjective objective'.

Piers Dudgeon is indeed a character in his own book. More than in most biographies, the reader is aware of the writer, partly because he uses the first person quite often and tells how he himself read a book or went to see a person (where he could just have reported his findings), and partly because he is a biographer who comments and judges, offering broadly psycho-analytical observations throughout. Tavener is always 'John', and a leading motif is his conviction that Tavener's compositions and the whole of his artistic development are most closely related to the nature and needs of his own psyche: for instance, it would be a mistake to

think that 'John writes religious music rather than music rooted in his own psyche'. Tavener himself says of *The Veil of the Temple* that it is 'the biggest thing I have ever done. It is a statement of my life.'

The Veil of the Temple, performed in the Temple Church, London, runs continuously from 10 o'clock at night till 5 in the morning (Tavener wanted the sun to rise on the naked body of Patricia Rozario, but the conductor, Stephen Layton, put a stop to that). Dudgeon writes well of the experience, and he writes extremely well of the monastery and Mother Thekla. The chapter on Tavener's women, including the heroic Mother Maria Skobtsova is vivid, informative and moving, also the least self-conscious. Mother Thekla (Marina Sharf) appears a wise and holy woman, second-hand judgement of whom would be an impertinence; but she does also seem to have had that sense called common, which seems otherwise to be in short supply. Towards the end she notes in her diary that John is 'so in his "discussion" vein of silly books'. Enough of the books in question is quoted to let one see just what she means.

I sometimes wondered, when reading this book, whether we speak the same language. And indeed, on the 'deeper' plane of meaning where these people seem to live, we do not. Ecstasy, for instance, is a condition I recognise and know, but to seek it as an end in itself or to try deliberately to create it in a work of art is, in my view, self-defeating. Tavener's gift to music has been distinctive and to many people extremely valuable, but it appears to incite a sensationism which its spiritual and intellectual associations render scarcely less distasteful than the more familiar and grosser kind. The author reports with apparent approval that the ovation at the end of *Ikon of Eros* (in America) was 'almost hysterical'. The composer is not ashamed to tell how members of the audience would cling to his hand for five minutes and say they would not wash the hand for a week. And how about this: 'They [Tavener and Mia Farrow] had been touched by the hell-fire of Catholicism and had developed a strong personal interest in "the small things of life, like death and religion and love", as Björk would later so beautifully characterise John's mystical bent?' **John Steane**



2: DAVID MCCLEERY



John Tavener the intense young composer of *The Whale*, and the mystic beloved of Björk: both are revealed

MEMORIES OF SHOSTAKOVICH

By REV MICHAEL ARDOV
Short Books, 192pp, HB, £11.99
ISBN 1-904095-64-X



When I die, please don't be preoccupied with my "immortality". So Shostakovich apparently instructed his family. He could hardly have foreseen how many others would rush to take that job upon themselves. But his two children – Maxim, the well-known conductor, and Galina, for many years a medical researcher – have been among the more reluctant contributors to the vast stock of memoirs. Even this little book, which could be comfortably read

in an evening, is amply padded with familiar reminiscences from others, such as the composer's long-term assistant and correspondent Isaak Glikman. And the compiler, a contemporary of Galina and Maxim and friend of the family since the mid-1950s, had to tease out their stories by stealth in the spring and summer of 2001.

Shostakovich was a protective father and for obvious reasons not inclined to burden his offspring with details of his inner and outer tribulations. Nor would Michael Ardo, now a Russian Orthodox priest, have been so tactless as to press his interviewees on subjects they themselves had not broached (though he must surely have been tempted to on the topic of religion and spirituality, where Maxim certainly has interesting views). The result is a volume with little to offer to the reader who knows Elizabeth Wilson's indispensable *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (Faber: 1994) and the Glikman letters (*Story of a Friendship*; Faber: 2001).

Yet that little certainly has its charm. The book is divided into 54 chapters, vignettes of domesticity, mostly, that piece together a mosaic of the composer's day-to-day life.

It begins with the children's earliest memories – of evacuation from besieged Leningrad and their teasing of Prokofiev at the composer's rest home where their father composed his Eighth Symphony – and ends with a touching tribute to their step-mother, Irina Antonovna Shostakovich, for her devotion to their father in his declining years. On the way we are reminded of his dodgy driving, of his obsession with cleanliness, of his enthusiasms – for umpiring volleyball and tennis (he once took pleasure in overruling the head of the KGB on a line-call) and refereeing football, for clocks, vodka and cats – and of his dislikes, which included guns, guests who overstayed their welcome, journalists, flowers and toasts.

To have all this gathered together in one slim volume is a delight. And there are incidental details concerning professional matters, such as the composer's brief observations on the staging of *Katerina Izmaylova* (the revised *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*), which I don't recall being previously available in English. The translation is faithful, but many details are unchecked and inaccurate – even the year of Shostakovich's



COURTESY OF THE SHOSTAKOVICH FAMILY ARCHIVE

Learn with father: Shostakovich reads with his daughter Galina

funeral is wrong. Never mind. There are some nice photos from the family album, and nowhere in the book is there the faintest suspicion of myth-making or hagiography. That's refreshing.

David Fanning

THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF BRIAN BOYDELL

Edited by GARETH COX,
AXEL KLEIN, MICHAEL TAYLOR
Irish Academic Press, 132pp, HB, £35.
ISBN 0-7165-2762-6



his short, readable remembrance of bio-chemist, painter, teacher, broadcaster, composer, musicologist and indefatigable music enthusiast Brian Boydell pays tribute to the life, career and music of the most

important Irish musical talent of the last century.

Born in 1917, fittingly enough on St Patrick's Day, Boydell, the son of good Protestant malt suppliers to good Catholic brewers Guinness, was educated in England – at Rugby he was instructed 'not to make his nationality an excuse for his behaviour' – and returned home to a country whose cultural life, in the middle of the last century, was introspective at best, retrogressive at worst.

Strikingly – and significantly – for the time, Boydell's points of reference were determinedly Continental rather than British. As co-founder of the Musical Association of Ireland, founder of the Dowland Consort, conductor of the Dublin Orchestral Players and professor at both Trinity College and the Royal Irish Academy of Music, his support for both young and established talent secured for generations of would-be musicians the viability of a distinctive and professional tradition not

imported from overseas, but of their own making. As a scholar his researches into the Italian madrigal and the musical life of 18th-century Dublin gave those same musicians both an international and national context that they had hitherto lacked.

But Boydell's abiding contribution to Irish cultural life is the considerable and varied body of his own compositions – the startling, rhythmically vital string quartets, not least, and the lyrical orchestral works – still fresh, still 'modern' and still admirable for their refusal to engage with cultural or political 'isms' of any kind.

As a jumping-off point, this collection of three essays profiling Boydell's life, output and approach to writing complemented by an interview with the feisty composer and detailed lists of compositions, critical writings and available discography, is a welcome provocation to further discussion and exploration of 20th-century Irish music.

Michael Quinn



EVENING HERALD

The multi-faceted Brian Boydell, caricatured in a November 1945 copy of the Evening Herald

AUDIO

THE MUSIC LOVERS' GUIDE TO THE BEST OF HI-FI

The return of the X

Musical Fidelity has revived its X-series, adopting the casework of the X-Cans V3 headphone amp (2/03) to replace the tubular housings of the original X-products. The new X-150 integrated amplifier is still compact, at 22 x 10 x 38cm, but it delivers plenty of power: 80W per channel into 8ohms and 2 x 160W into 4ohms.

The X-150's drive circuit derives from the Tri-Vista series; it is designed to give a neutral, dynamic sound. The power supply has been laid out so that it has no effect on the signal path, and the driver circuit is heavily decoupled and isolated from it. The designers say that electrically and

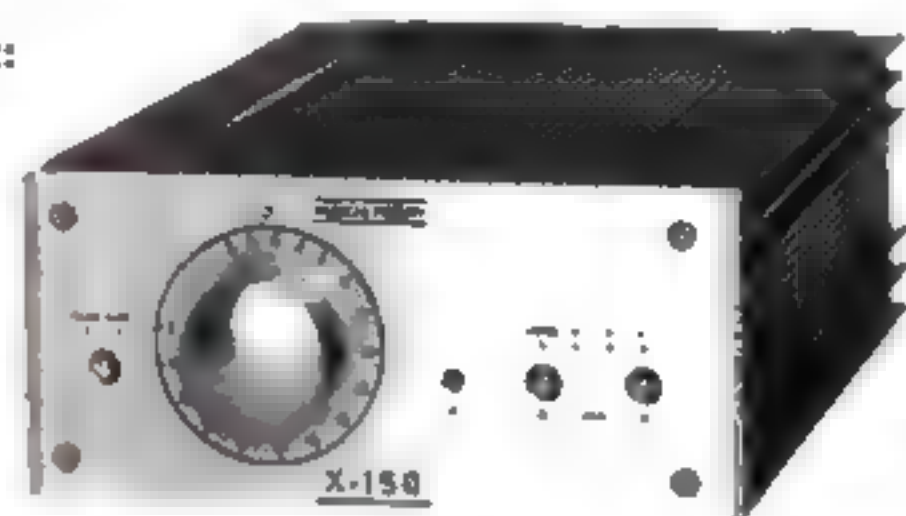
technically it exhibits similar qualities to a dual mono amp.

The output stage uses two pairs of large output transistors per channel to give a high peak current, low output impedance and good stability, enabling the X-150 to drive a wide range of speakers. A phono stage and three pairs of line-level inputs contribute to its flexibility and long-term usefulness. The X-150 uses a dual gang analogue volume control; Musical Fidelity has found that inferior digital volume controls can suffer noise problems at low levels. The new amp will sell for £799.

Tel +44 (0)20 8900 2866

web www.musicalfidelity.com

Punches above its weight:
the new X-series



REL starts a Stampede

Welsh subwoofer specialist REL has launched two new designs – its first in three years. These new versions of the established Strata and the Stampede use a digital control system which REL claims is 'the most precise and comprehensive control of calibration parameters available in the sub-bass system market'.

The entry-level Stampede in Brittex black (£550) or wood veneer (£635) is designed for small rooms. It shares with the larger Strata 5 (£700 in black, £800 in veneer) a digital control system and a remote control which allows the unit to be set up from the listening position. Options include volume and crossover adjustments, REL's usual choice of Slam and Depth modes, and even a child lock.

DC-coupled amps are used for both units, with line-level and high-level inputs; both stages are fully isolated from the power

amplification. There are cables for both line and speaker inputs, and a 12V trigger connection for use in custom installation systems. Both subwoofers use a sealed box design for easier room integration.

Tel +44 (0)1656 768777

web www.rel.net



Digital control from REL's two new 'ST' models

Mission gets elegante



The elegance of black,
from Mission

Elegance is the key to Mission's three new speaker systems: influenced by Mission's flagship Pilastro, the 'elegante' range features a gently curved profile to optimise sound dispersion. The cabinets have a polished, hand-lacquered finish and use Paramid-S drivers for their rigidity and damping properties.

As in the Volare v60 speakers, Mission's engineers have incorporated copper and aluminium rings, to reduce inductance modulation effects in the motor structure.

All three systems will be available in 5.1 and 6.1 configurations

with an option to upgrade to 7.1. The £2490 e80 5.1 package consists of four bookshelf e80 loudspeakers, an e8c centre-channel and a compact 350W e8as1 subwoofer. The e82 system (£3490 for 5.1) replaces the e80 front speakers with slimline e82 floorstanders. The subwoofer can be upgraded to the 500W e8as2 or by using two e8as1 subwoofers. The e83 uses larger e83 floorstanders, e81 bookshelf speakers for the surround channels, the e8c and the e8as2 subwoofer.

Tel +44 (0)1480 423700

web www.mission.co.uk

Black Rhodium powers up



Managing mains power at source

The debate about cables and their effects shows no sign of cooling down, but Black Rhodium is tackling the problem at source – literally so, as it has introduced a Super Mains Power Management block. It provides eight 13 amp mains sockets and is terminated with a 2m length of Super Mains 25, a high current, low impedance mains cable designed to deliver high quality sound with powerful and tight bass.

The cable is made from 19 core stranded wire of 0.45mm

diameter silver-plated copper and is insulated to a very high voltage with silicon rubber. The main benefit of using this insulator, the company says, is that the leading edges and decays of music are more naturally reproduced due to extremely low dielectric loss.

The Power Management with two metre Super Mains 25 cable has a typical selling price of around £330.

Tel +44 (0)1332 361390

web www.blackrhodium.co.uk

QUAD CORRECTION

There was an error in our obituary of Quad founder Peter Walker (Audio, March). The Quad ESL-57 loudspeaker was in production from 1957 until 1985, and the ESL-63 between 1981 and 1999.

FEEDBACK

Your audio opinions, problems and queries

SACD or not?

I understood SACD discs to be DSD throughout the production chain, but the small print on one of my discs says 'This recording has been recorded and edited at 24-bit resolution', and Ivor Humphreys says in his recent review of *Scheherazade* that it's 'derived from 48kHz/24-bit originals (PCM as opposed to SACD's proprietary process) which may, possibly, account for a certain edge to the upper strings pleasingly absent from most native SACD recordings.'

Shouldn't discs derived from analogue or PCM have labelling to make it clear that they don't reach the full standard possible?

ROY H THORNTON
EMSWORTH, HANTS, UK

Audio Editor – Some, but not all, SACD discs are sourced from DSD masters, and of course the remasters of old analogue recordings are made straight to DSD. But there's more to how good or bad discs sound than just the technology used in the original recording and during the mastering stages.

Rather expensive radio

My jaw dropped when I read Andrew Everard's review of the Densen B-800 tuner (February). How can a radio possibly be £850?

The 'old' *Gramophone* gave the impression that any differences between CD players were so small as to be all but inaudible. Surely the same must be true of radio tuners, as the frequency range of FM cuts off at 16kHz.

I'm also unsure what was meant by Densen's reference to the 'air guitar'; this is an instrument with which I am yet to be acquainted.

BRIAN PATTINSON
BURY ST EDMUNDS, UK

AE – I'll repeat my usual mantra: 'if you can hear the difference, spend the money; if you can't, keep your wallet in your pocket'. My ears tell me some pricier tuners are well worth the extra expenditure. And that 'air guitar'; it comes from the glory days of rock music, where fans were so taken with the sound they'd 'play along' with guitar solos on imaginary instruments. That's what Densen's getting at, as I attempted to explain.

Where to buy new LPs?

I wonder how relevant are the recent reviews of record players in these pages. Yes, many readers may still have extensive LP collections, and there's no shortage of secondhand records in the charity shops and specialist dealers. But are any new – or at least reissued – LPs being

released, and if so how does one go about buying them?

PHILIP SINCLAIR
FORFAR, UK

AE – There are many dealers who sell new and used LPs. For new discs Vivante is good: its website's at www.vivante.co.uk, or call +44 (0)1293 822186.

Causes of confusion

My system comprises an Arcam Delta 270 CD player with matching amplifier and power amp (Delta 290 and 290P) triwired to a pair of Ruark Crusader II speakers. The choral and orchestral sound is dry and constricted despite reducing the furniture in the room – about 4x5m – and exposing the wooden floor, and seems very 'directional'.

Can you suggest modifications or changes to improve matters?

ROGER GARTLAND
VIA E-MAIL

AE – I can't help feeling that the reduction in furnishing and exposing that floor will have done more harm than good. It sounds like the room is now very 'lively' and prone to early reflections, which can only confuse the ears and make the brain concentrate on the speaker locations as a point of reference. Softening the room a bit would help.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

First-time advice

As a recent convert to classical music thanks to school music lessons, I'm thinking of buying a hi-fi system to replace the little all-in-one I've been using in my bedroom up to now. The system will have to be both affordable and relatively compact as – exam results and top-up fees permitting – I hope to be going to university this autumn, and would like to take the system with me if I can.

Do you have any suggestions? I suppose I don't really want to spend much more than £200 or so per component, which I know is less than most of the equipment reviewed in the Audio pages, but I can't find anywhere else that reviews equipment with so much of a focus on classical music.

CHRIS COLLINS
LONDON, UK

AE – Ah yes, that all-important first system: mine was a Sansui turntable, an Amstrad amplifier and a pair of Solavox speakers, and brands long gone from the UK audio arena!

Wistful sighing apart, there are obvious contenders at this level. The Cambridge Audio Azur 540A and 540C, the less expensive counterparts of the '640' models tested in the February issue, would be good choices at £200 apiece. You could use these with the fine little Monitor Audio Bronze B2 speakers and get a very good sound indeed.

If you want to save even more money for CDs, try the £150 Marantz CD5400 CD player and £180 PM4400 amplifier, together with the £130 Mission m71i speakers.



Send your letters and e-mails to Andrew Everard, *Gramophone*, 38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middx TW11 0JE, UK
gramaudio@haynet.com

One letter each month will win speaker stands from leading hi-fi and home entertainment furniture manufacturer Alphason. The stands feature a metal column and stylish glass base and retail for about £80.



'In the wider world of retail, the eyes have it at the moment'

It seems much of the home audio industry is waiting for a revolution. And no, I'm not talking about Super Audio this or high-resolution that; instead, many people I've talked to recently are hoping against hope that the time will soon come when consumers rediscover how important good sound can be.

After all, one of the big – and I mean big – consumer draws of recent times has been the big screen: as plasma screens fall in price and liquid crystal display technology grows in quality, it seems buyers are craving the 'instant hit' excitement of a big picture, and paying not much attention to the sound quality of the equipment that feeds the screen. Even the BBC has got in on the act: a recent report by the *Click Online* technology programme concluded that 'for the vast majority of us it seems as though sound is a low priority, merely something that goes in one ear and out the other'.

What everyone is clinging onto is the hunch that once big-screen displays become commonplace buyers will start to rediscover that high-quality sound can enhance the TV viewing experience, whether we're talking Hollywood blockbusters or operas and concerts on DVD. None of that will come as much of a revelation to readers of these pages, but it seems that out in the wider world of retail, the eyes have it at the moment.

This month's products show the way forward, from Sony's all-in-one DAV-SC6 to a DVD player from a top British name. Happy viewing – and listening!

Andrew Everard
Audio Editor

THE NEED FOR VISION

Audio doctor Dominic Dawes is on the case

Lois Lomas

This month's patient is impatient to get to know her favourite opera recordings on DVD-Video, but with space at a premium can she get the home cinema experience without moving house?

I need fidelity for Fidelio and magic for my Flute – what can I do?

There's a prediction we keep hearing these days: with new developments in home technology, the way we listen to music is changing. And with the large increase in music DVD-Video titles – which enable you to see as well as hear the performance – this may well turn out to be true.

Particularly in the case of opera, the benefits of being able to experience the whole production from the comfort of your armchair are persuasive indeed. Take Lois Lomas, an opera fan from Suffolk. Lois has been listening to her music on a Technics micro system, but she wrote to us having heard about a number of tantalising new DVD-V releases of the classic operas. Wouldn't it be great, she reasoned, to be able to watch and listen to the finest opera productions with high-quality digital pictures and full 5.1 surround sound to boot.

A very good point, we thought, so we set the audio ambulance's auto-pilot system (otherwise known as photographer Toby Wales) in the direction of Suffolk with a choice of complete home-cinema-in-a-box systems for Lois to sample.

Lois told us she wants to keep the budget 'in the region of a £1000', so the advantages of a complete all-in-one system are clear. For maximum value for money, there is no better way of getting the full surround sound deal: DVD player, decoder/amplifier, five satellite speakers and a subwoofer. Plus, Lois's room is quite small, so she made it clear from the outset that she wanted discreet, small speakers that won't dominate the room.

When we arrive, Lois is open to suggestions about her room layout, though there is an impressively large desk that dominates one end of the room and limits options. Various possibilities are discussed including moving the TV across the room to a position just in front of the window, to be flanked by the front speakers of whichever system she eventually decides upon. For the time being, however, we decide to leave her furniture where it is, determined to demonstrate that systems such as the ones we've brought can be discreetly installed in even the most seemingly unaccommodating of rooms.

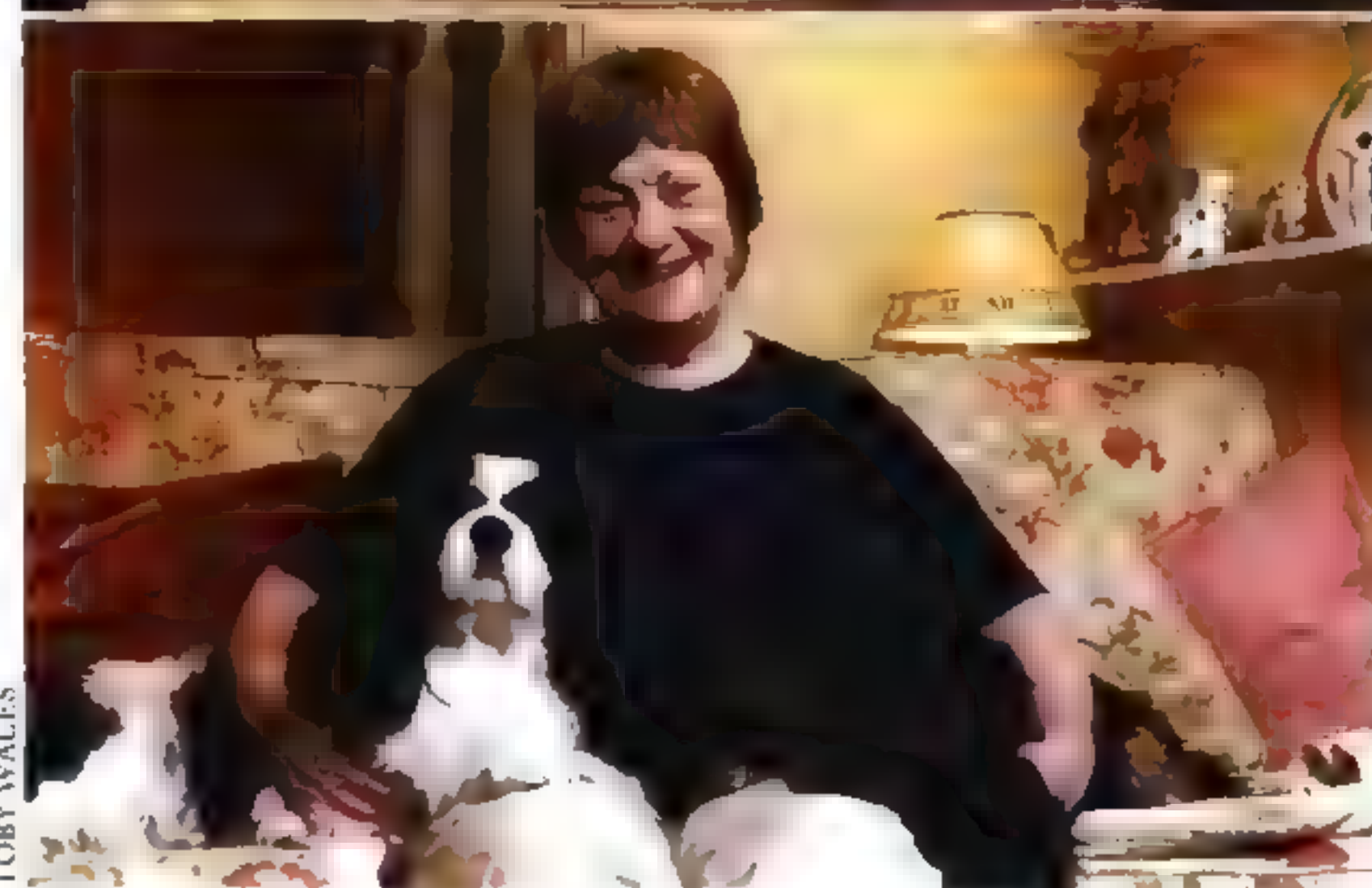
Seeing as Lois doesn't even own a DVD player already, we start by asking her how she became interested in the format. 'It's a new era. I've just noticed that all my favourite operas are now becoming available on DVD,' she says. 'That's what started it. There's one very recent one that decided me: the production of *The Magic Flute* that was on at the Royal Opera House last year. Now I would like to see it again.'

She's also very taken with the idea of remastered films of old productions becoming available again. 'There are things from 25 years ago that are being reissued now, and we can see it all again in good quality on DVD,' she says.

So, we begin by setting up a Panasonic system, the SC-HT1000. This system offers an impressive number of options for £1000: as well as playing DVDs and CDs – and also decoding Dolby Digital and DTS and powering its five speakers and a subwoofer – it can record from TV on DVD-R discs. And it even plays the new audiophile format, DVD-Audio. We suspect there may be a kitchen sink in there somewhere as well.



Is Teac's 700/800 system (above) or Panasonic's SC-HT1000 the best to bring the opera house into Lois Lomas's front room?



TOBY WALES

Given what Lois has told us, we decide to test the system using one of her favourites – the latest DVD edition of *The Magic Flute*, recorded and filmed at The Royal Opera House last year with Sir Colin Davis conducting.

The music sounds impressive indeed, the Panasonic delivering solid, tight bass and an open enough midrange to find the nuances in the production's excellent vocal performances.

'It's amazing,' says Lois. 'It's incredible that all these improvements have happened and are now available at this low price.' As the opera progresses, the Panasonic's ability to communicate the subtleties and details of the orchestra are apparent. Lois clearly agrees: 'Yes, you can hear all the instruments very clearly.'

Our DVD of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, recorded at Covent Garden in 1991, conducted by Christoph von Dohnányi and featuring soprano Gabriela Beňačková as Leonora, is given a similarly impressive workout by the Panasonic SC-HT1000. The depth and dynamics of the music are communicated with real muscularity and power, while the intricacies of the orchestration are clearly articulated by the Panasonic's open performance.

However, we have another system with us, one that could run the Panasonic close for both style and sound. So, out comes the TEAC Legacy 700/800 system (£1100). Unlike the Panasonic, the TEAC doesn't offer DVD recording or DVD-Audio. It splits the electronics into two boxes as opposed to the Panasonic's one: the player unit incorporates the decoding and stereo amplification for the two front channels, while a second unit is a dedicated three-channel power amplifier to drive the centre and rear speakers.

Despite the TEAC's slightly less impressive spec sheet, it does have the advantage of some very elegant styling, and this strikes Lois immediately. 'Yes, it's nicer – the TEAC is definitely the better looking of the two,' she says.

When we get the TEAC into action with *The Magic Flute*,

the TEAC's performance is startling. The system's subwoofer may be more cumbersome than the Panasonic's sub, but it also communicates the low frequencies with a more effortless air, with taut, powerful bass that supports the higher frequencies well. The system's treble is smooth and articulate, with flute and piccolo parts coming to the fore beautifully.

Is Lois convinced? Does the TEAC's performance justify giving it priority over the Panasonic, despite that system's extra features such as DVD recording and DVD-Audio?

Conclusion

Lois is pensive while she contemplates her final decision. As she does so, the TEAC's excellent timing does a fine job with Beethoven's fast string writing in *Fidelio*, played with aplomb by the Royal Opera House Orchestra. She says she's interested in being able to record to DVD, which should push her toward the Panasonic. But on the other hand, the design and sound of the TEAC obviously have her enthralled. 'I love the TEAC for the look, and I think that's deciding me,' she says.

Finally, after musing over the recording issue, she has made up her mind. Listening to a particularly stunning passage from Beňačková, Lois looks up and says, 'Listen to that voice, it's lovely. Sopranos are a great test. If you can get that lovely creamy sound, then you know you're on to something.'

So, the TEAC wins out – by a hair. And with the prospect of more of us enjoying the complete opera experience, staging and all, on DVD in the future, perhaps the technological prophets have a point: perhaps the way we listen to music really is changing. ●

CURRENT SET-UP

Technics micro system

WE TOOK ALONG

TEAC Legacy 700/800 system

Panasonic SC-HT1000 system

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GRAMOPHONE DISC OF THE MONTH

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HYPERION CDA 67456.....

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DECCA 475 250-2.....£12.99
"DEATH & DEVOTION": Cantatas by Buxtehude, Ritter etc; Zomer etc
CHANNEL CLASSICS CCSSA 20804 (SACD Hybrid).....£12.99
HUMMEL: Missa Solemnis, Te Deum; Soloists/Grodd/NZSO
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KARLOWICZ: Symphony in E minor etc; Noseda/BBC PO
CHANDOS CHAN 10171.....£12.99

KOZENA: Magdalena Kozena sings Britten, Ravel, Respighi etc
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MACHAUT: Motets; Hilliard Ensemble
ECM 472 702-2.....£12.99
MONTEVERDI: Orfeo; Bostridge, Dessay etc/Haim/Le Concert d'Astree
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LSO 0045.....£4.99
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BIS SACD 1390 (SACD Hybrid).....£12.99
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DG 474 836-2.....£11.99
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TELARC CD 80620.....£12.99
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SIGNUM SIGCD 506.....£12.99
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TDK DV-OPPLT 2 DVDs.....£31.99
ROSALYN TURECK: Bach Goldberg Variations - St Petersburg 1995
VAI DVD 4252.....£24.99
VERDI: Otello; Domingo, Fleming, Morris/Levine/Met.
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E&OE

Arcam DiVA DV78

British DVD player puts quality first

Based on the DV88, but at a lower price, the new Arcam claims superb performance. Andrew Everard investigates

There are two major trends in the DVD market: basic players continue to plummet in price, while most high-end machines are moving towards offering 'universal' DVD-Audio and SACD playback. You can now buy a no-frills DVD player for around the £30 mark, while 'universal' machines start at £250 and go all the way up into the stratosphere of high-end audio, claiming to offer the best of DVD-Video playback plus fine performance with CDs and the new 'high resolution' discs.

And yet the new Arcam DiVA78 player offers no compatibility with SACD or DVD-Audio discs; instead, Arcam founder John Dawson says that 'There are millions of standard DVDs and CDs out there and that's what most people play... We have concentrated on the highest possible performance for the software that people actually own and buy.'

The £700 DV78 is a simplified version of the DiVA DV88 Plus, which costs just under £1000. But for 'simplified' don't read 'stripped down': the only significant omission is of the more expensive machine's upgradability to DVD-Audio. The real money has been saved, Arcam says, by a complete re-engineering, allowing more efficient production. The electronics have been consolidated onto a single four-layer fibreglass circuitboard and this, along with a revised power supply, has simplified the construction and assembly of the player, the company says, 'without compromising quality'.

There are other players offering the same facilities – progressive scan video output from both PAL and NTSC titles, and a wide range of disc compatibility – but this model is clearly designed to achieve high standards of overall performance, and must thus shine with standard DVDs and CDs, and when



Sounding like an Arcam CD player and boasting advanced video capability, the DV78 is a DiVA worth getting to know

run into 'normal' TV sets, rather than those with progressive scan capability. And if it's to live up to its promise about audio CD, it needs to have pretty good analogue output, too.

To achieve all that, there's plenty of heavyweight engineering under the lid. The video processing is in the hands of the Vaddis 5 processor from Californian company Zoran; the same company also provides 32-bit digital signal processing for the player's audio output. Six 10-bit 54MHz digital-to-analogue converters handle video, allowing simultaneous interlaced component or RGB, S-video and composite video output, while the stereo analogue audio outputs are fed by 24-bit 192kHz conversion from Wolfson, as used in Arcam's dedicated CD players.

As well as DVD-Video and CD titles, the dual-laser transport handles MP3 and Windows Media Audio files from CD-R discs, using an on-screen browser to access tracks. The player is also compatible with other formats listed in the specification box, and Arcam claims that the DV78 will play 'most copy protected CDs'.

Performance

The Arcam is simple to set up, whether you're using the progressive video output or an RGB Scart connection, thanks to clear onscreen menus. The machine is supplied in the UK as a Region 2 device, but hacking it to multi-region to play discs from around the world is simple: with the disc-drawer open you press the set-up button, then key in 1111 on the remote, followed by a region number – for example 01 for region 1, or 13 for region-free operation.

Even on the RGB Scart output pictures look crisp and well-defined, with good colour gradation, though the overall balance is a little dark, and may need adjustment of your television's brightness and contrast levels. However, this is certainly preferable to the garish hues provided by some budget players, and there's no hint of softness to the picture. It certainly makes well-engineered opera and concert discs look good, and the picture quality is matched by Dolby Digital and DTS sound that demonstrates the quality of the digital output on offer. Fed into my reference TAG McLaren/PMC system, the Arcam sounded as good as any DVD player I've encountered.

With CDs, too, the DV78 lives up to its promise, in that it sounds very like an Arcam CD player. That means a combination of weight and power plus the kind of smoothness that ensures the player won't ever exacerbate the problems of systems with a tendency to brightness, or emphasise the bright balance of some recordings. Indeed, the Arcam has a tendency to soften the sound of some discs; the result is certainly easy to listen to.

The trade-off is a loss of openness and ambience; played through the Arcam, vibrant recordings made in concert halls and churches are a bit dry and anonymous for my liking, and the hairs on the back of the neck stayed resolutely supine. More 'tingle factor' wouldn't go amiss, and there's no shortage of sub-£500 CD players available to give the Arcam a run for its money.

All that said, this is a sensible choice if you want a single player able to play both DVDs and CDs

well, and its advanced video capability will appeal to those with progressive-scan-compliant TVs, plasma displays or projectors. But I don't think it's quite the universal solution Arcam would have us believe; my money would still go on a good sub-£500 CD player and a more modest DVD machine. After all, budget DVD hardware is now very good indeed, and I don't think we've seen the last of the developments in video transfer technology. That analogue progressive scan output is very good indeed, but fashions and trends in this market move fast. 

Arcam DiVA DV78

Type DVD-Video player

Price £700

Disc formats supported

DVD-V, DVD-R/RW, DVD+R/RW, Video CD, SVCD, CD-R/RW, MP3, WMA, Kodak Photo CD and JPEG

Outputs

Stereo analogue audio, optical and electrical digital audio, composite, RGB Scart and S-video, component video with PAL/NTSC progressive scan option

Inputs

Remote control

Digital to analogue conversion

10-bit/54MHz (video), 24-bit/192kHz (audio)

Accessories

Supplied remote handset

Dimensions (W x H x D)

435 x 80 x 350mm

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Bowers & Wilkins 704

Floorstanders with a powerful presentation

The smaller of two new B&W floorstanders, the 704s combine elegance with a superb sound, says Andrew Everard

Founded the better part of 40 years ago, B&W has established itself as one of the world's leading speaker manufacturers, and certainly the UK's most successful. And it has an enviable pedigree in the classical field: its original 801 speakers, launched in 1979, were rapidly adopted by classical studios, as were the Matrix 801 speakers 10 years later and 1998's Nautilus 800 series. Many of the company's lower-priced models have drawn on the design of these flagship products; the new 700 Series is no exception.

Replacing the company's CDM NT range, the 700 Series is designed for both stereo and multichannel applications. Three main speaker models are available – the £900-a-pair 705 standmount model and the 704 (£1400) and 703 (£2000) floorstanders. The HTM7 centre speaker costs £500, the DS7 dipole surrounds are £900 a pair, and there are two subwoofers, the £1000 ASW700 and the £1200 ASW750. B&W intend the main speakers to be used in conventional stereo systems or, combined with the centre, surround and subwoofer models, to build 5.1-, 6.1- or even 7.1-channel systems. All the speakers are available in high-quality wood veneers and the wall-mountable DS7 sur-

rounds come in black or white.

The company has done its research: it uses state-of-the-art laser measurement technology to improve its understanding of drive unit materials and how they behave. And the drivers here use materials that will be familiar to those who have seen or heard B&W speakers of the recent past. It also uses a combination of an aluminium disc and a copper cap on the pole piece for better control of the magnetic forces within the speaker's motor system, B&W calling this combination 'Balanced Drive'. This mid/bass unit hands over to a paper/Kevlar diaphragm bass unit of the same size, having a gentle upper roll-off around 150Hz and going right down to 40Hz, while the treble above 4kHz is handled by a 25mm alloy dome tweeter, designed for good extension to look after DVD-A and SACD recordings.

The cabinets for the 700 series come from the B&W factory in Denmark which makes the curved boxes for the 800 Series. The technology developed for the 800 helped to create the 700s' curved one-piece front baffled and top-plate, adding strength and providing a solid platform for the tweeter, which is 'free-mounted' in a pod and uses a Nautilus-style tapered tube behind the driver to offer better control. Talking of tapering, the 704s' cabinets taper from front to back within, avoiding standing waves and other box colorations, and the enclosures are extensively braced, and vented using B&W's Flowport tubes. These use 'golfball' dimples to

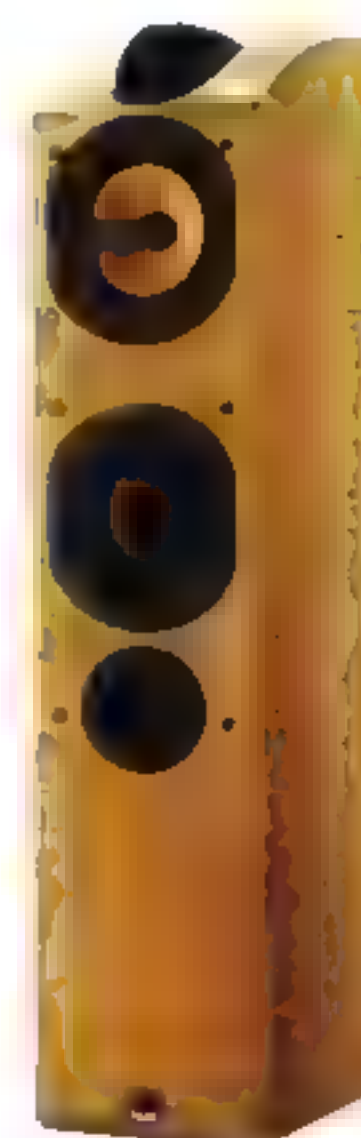
smooth the airflow within them, and the 704s have two ports: one in the front baffle, and one to the rear, with foam 'plugs' provided to tame any wayward bass.

The 704 is an elegantly proportioned design: it stands just under 96cm tall, with that sloping top panel and pod-mounted tweeter making it look shorter than it is. Spikes and biwireable terminals are provided and the speakers present an easy load to an amplifier, thanks to 8ohm nominal impedance and 90B/W/m sensitivity. The speakers are best use with their main grilles removed, and you can also take the covers off the tweeter pods, but they're designed to sound just as good with the sleek moulding in place.

Performance

After a few days' use to get the speakers loosened up and settled at room temperature I spent some time moving them around the room, experimenting with those foam bungs and generally tweaking. To a great extent I needn't have bothered: there's an inherent rightness about the sound of the 704s that lets them deliver fine imaging and an open, unforced soundstage.

In the interests of science I tried them on the end of a low-powered amplifier, and discovered that the 50-150W suggested input is no machismo on the part of the B&W designers: despite that relatively high sensitivity, the 704s thrive on a healthy dose of power and current. They'll make a noise with lower-powered amps, but switching to something with



The new B&W 704s continue a great company tradition

energy to spare gives a sound much better suited to the big, vibrant, easy music-making of which these speakers are capable. For this test I spent a lot of time with them on the end of my usual TAG McLaren Audio 100x5R:10 power amplifier, using two channels to biamp each speaker, but I also had fine results with my elderly Michaelson Audio Chronos pre/power amplifier combination, which certainly isn't short of power, and has the kind of liquid delivery and mighty punch that really makes these speakers sing. That suggests they'll also work well with amps like the Musical Fidelity A3.2 integrated, or indeed the Exposure XXIII/ XXVIII pre/power amps (reviewed in March).

And they do sing: connected to the TAG McLaren power amp and AV32R preamp/processor, here running in

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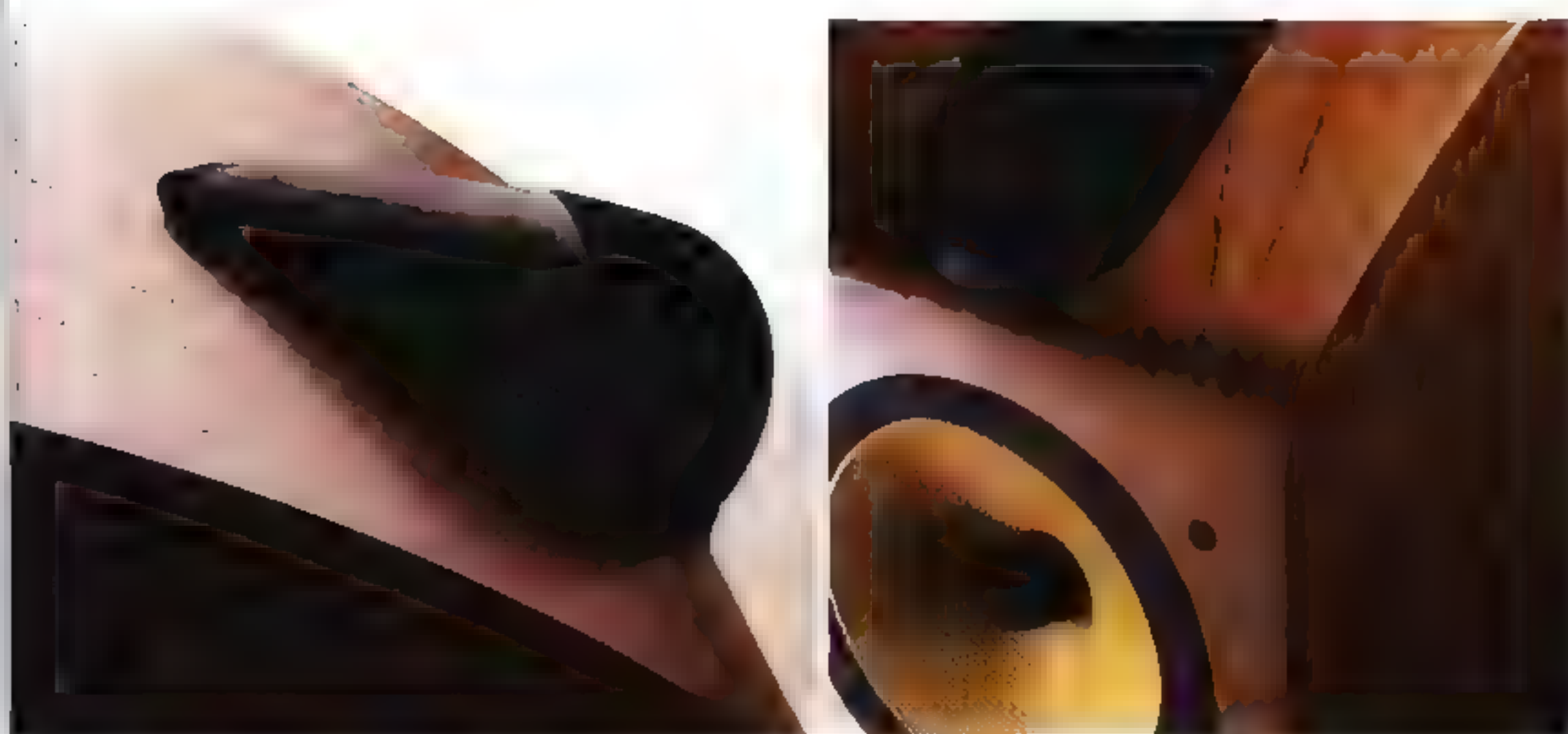
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B&W 704

Type

Floorstanding loudspeakers

Price

£1400/pr

Drive units

25mm metal dome tweeter, 16.5cm woven Kevlar cone mid/bass unit, 16.5cm Kevlar/paper woofer

Crossover

Biwireable, crossover points 150Hz and 4kHz
Frequency range 40Hz-25kHz +/-3dB on axis

Sensitivity

90dB/W/m

Impedance

8ohm nominal, 4.1ohm minimum

Power requirements

50-150W

Finishes

available in black ash, cherry, maple, 'rosenut' and walnut real wood veneers

Dimensions (H x W x D)

95.7 x 22.2 x 31.9cm

Made by

B&W Loudspeakers Ltd, Dale Rd, Worthing, Sussex BN11 2BH

Tel +44 (0)1903 221500

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two-channel mode, the B&Ws have a tight precision that's easy to admire. They image beautifully, and the sense of depth in the soundstage picture is excellent; I've rarely heard speakers do such a good job of disappearing, leaving the music spread before the listener, with so little faffing about needed to set them up.

Beyond that initial impression of lucidity and an entirely natural view of music where the percussive attack of, say, the piano is gorgeous, the B&Ws are equally capable with the big, lush orchestrations of Richard Rodgers on a 1992 John Mauceri-conducted Philips disc of his overtures. The way in which the overture to *Carousel* slowly gains momentum is thrilling on the B&Ws, which place the orchestra before the listener and hold the image rock-solid and transparent as the music builds, subsides and grows again.

The speakers are even more impressive with music theatre: the original 1979 cast recording of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* can sound rather brash and brittle in its 1990 CD reissue on some systems. But with the Michaelson Audio Chronos amps and B&Ws on the end of the Marantz CD7 player, the weight and power on tap offsets the rather strident top end. It can't flatter the strained vocals of Len Cariou in the title-role, but the passion of his performance comes over and the dynamic range and orchestral power are well represented.

But what I like most about these speakers is that they've been designed for relatively wide dispersion – no less than 40° in the horizontal plane, no doubt with an eye to better integration in surround sound systems – and this means that excellent imaging and sense of soundstaging is

maintained even when you move well away from the ideal listening 'sweet spot'. These aren't for one listener to enjoy and the rest of the household to hate.

Thanks to their high sensitivity, that well-engineered 'two-and-a-half-way' design and a choice of wood finishes, the B&W 704s manage one of the hardest tricks in the loudspeaker world: they sound wonderful without taking over half of your room. The engineers deserve full credit for making a compact, fine-looking loudspeaker with a sound that will please both demanding listeners and their families. I'd suggest anyone thinking of buying a pair of superior floorstanding loudspeakers should audition these over an extended period. 'Long and hard' would be the usual phrase to describe the process, but the B&Ws are such a delight to listen to that I suspect the time will fly by. ●

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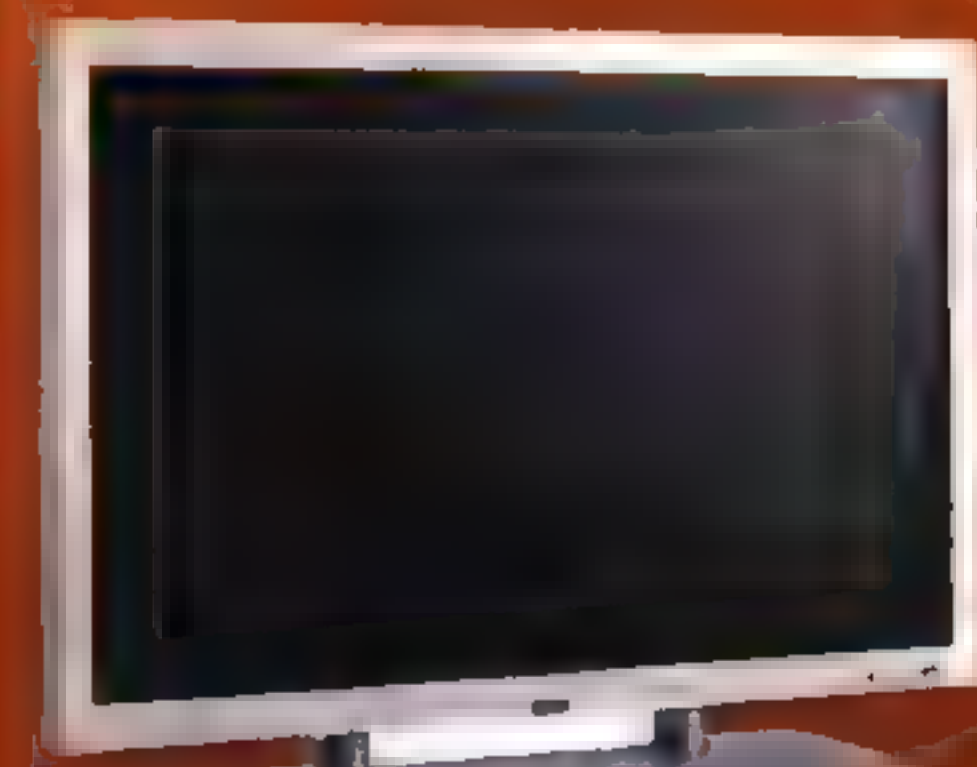
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Denon DVD-1400

Compact player offers all round ability

The most affordable Denon universal player to date is very good, but James Vesey says it's not without competition

The 'format battle' between DVD-Audio and Super Audio CD is now widely acknowledged to have become an irrelevance. After all, a number of manufacturers now have 'universal' players in their ranges, at every level from all-in-one systems to high-end hardware.

Pioneer has led this trend, and that company's £250 DV-565A (reviewed 10/03) is the most affordable player of this kind to date. It plays CD, DVD-V, DVD-A and SACD discs, as well as handling MP3 and JPEG files on computer-made CD-R discs, and does so to a relatively high standard. It's an ideal partner for Pioneer's affordable multi-channel receivers, hooked up with a digital connection for DVD-Video and six channels of analogue cables for audio-only formats. With a suitable receiver and a cost-effective speaker package this would comprise a complete surround package for less than £1000.

You might have to try harder to obtain such a system for the same money using Denon's latest 'universal' machine, but the £400 DVD-1400 has been designed to partner that company's lower-end receivers, such as the AVR-1804 (2/04), and is the least expensive Denon player of this kind to date. As with other companies, Denon entered the 'universal' player market at a relatively high level, but the technology has percolated down: there are now four machines of this type in Denon's catalogue, from the high-end DVD-A11 to this one.

The DVD-1400 looks relatively unassuming at just 7.5cm tall and a little over 21cm deep, and it weighs not much more than 2kg. It lacks some of the currently fashionable DVD player facilities – there are component video outputs as well as the current composite, S-video and RGB Scart

connections, but the machine has no progressive scan capability. That said, the majority of conventional TV sets have no compatibility with progressive video signals, and for most users the RGB Scart connection will offer more than acceptable picture quality.

The player offers both optical and electrical digital outputs for sound – the latter is crisper and clearer – and stereo analogue line outs, as well as a panel of six line outputs for surround sound from the internal decoders. These can be used for Dolby Digital/DTS sound from DVD-Video discs as well as DVD-Audio and SACD, but the 'high-resolution' audio output is only available at line level, not from the digital connections. For the best all-round

Performance

The Denon is simple to set up: with all the connections made, the on-screen menus display the various video and audio options. The remote handset, while lacking the clarity of colour coding, is no harder to navigate than is usual with devices of this kind. The compact dimensions of the player make it easy to accommodate in equipment racks, but I found the light weight and slightly tinny feel of the case-work a little disconcerting, even if it seemed to have no impact on the performance.

And with a wide variety of material on DVD-Video, from the Royal Opera House *Peter Grimes* – a two-channel disc on Warner – to TDK's excellent Suzuki/Bach Collegium Japan multi-channel disc of the Bach



Denon's new £400 player will take on most disc formats for video and audio

ability with a conventional AV receiver, it's best to connect the player with both an electrical digital connection and the six-channel audio.

Under the lid, the Denon uses a 54MHz digital-to-analogue converter for video, and 24-bit/192kHz conversion for audio, with a 2MB internal buffer memory designed to ensure there are no glitches during layer changes on DVD discs. Even so, the player did hiccup momentarily at the layer-change point with some discs. Bass management is provided for the analogue outputs, allowing the use of small speakers with a subwoofer or larger, full-range speakers. A Pure Direct Mode enables the video circuitry and/or the display to be turned off during playback of audio-only discs, thus minimising interference. Finally, the machine will play a host of different formats (see box) including JPEG pictures stored on CD-R/RW.

St John Passion, the Denon sounds very good indeed. The video quality on the Britten leaves something to be desired, but this is down to 1981 TV standards rather than the inherent capabilities of the DVD-1400, as is clear when you load the pinsharp TDK disc. The Japanese recording looks glorious, although admittedly the brightly lit concert hall set-up is easier to convey than the dark Covent Garden stage of Elijah Moshinsky's *Grimes*. Its open, crisp audio, with subtle ambience on the rear channels, shows just how thick and distant is the sound on the Britten disc.

Results are more mixed with audio formats: CDs are light in the bass and lack ambience in the high treble, but these are common DVD player failings, and are addressed when DVD-Audio and in particular SACD discs are loaded. Bringing a separate bass channel and a subwoofer into play fills out the sound to a noticeable degree, while the difference between the CD and

DENON DVD 1400

Type

DVD-V/DVD-A/SACD player

Price

£400

Disc formats DVD-V, DVD-A, SACD, CD, CD-R/RW, DVD-R/RW, DVD+R/RW, VCD/SVCD, MP3, WMA, JPEG

Video outputs

Component, composite, S-Video, RGB Scart

Audio outputs Two-channel and 5.1-channel line

Digital outputs Optical, electrical

Accessories supplied

Remote handset, cables

Dimensions (W x H x D)

435 x 75 x 211mm

Made by Denon UK, Hayden Laboratories Ltd, Chiltern Hill, Chalfont St Peter, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 9UG

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SACD layers of hybrid discs is immediately apparent. In stereo the SACD playback is open and involving, and well-mastered multi-channel discs really spring to life, wrapping the listener in a believable soundfield. A dedicated SACD player will show the error of the Denon's ways when it comes to sheer weight and power, not to mention the finer nuances of atmosphere and instrumental timbre, but as a combination player the DVD-1400 is rather good.

Still, the Pioneer DV-565A is available for £150 less – quite a margin at this level of the market. The Denon has the edge over the less expensive player when connected to a high-end surround set-up and with its Pure Direct Mode engaged, but through lesser receivers, of the kind with which players at this level are likely to be used, the differences are all but indistinguishable. This is a very good player indeed, but for many users it may suffer when compared with the Pioneer. ●

Room equalisation

Systems that adapt to suit where you listen

Is room equalisation the answer to one the last great variables of audio performance?

Tony Williams ponders

When it comes to setting up a system and making sure all the components work together, manufacturers can only do so much. The designer of a CD player can adjust its output stages so it is immune to the effects of changes of interconnect cable, and do everything possible to isolate the vulnerable electronics from external electromagnetic and physical interference, while amplifier engineers strive to design products able to drive and control even the most recalcitrant speaker loads. Meanwhile those versed in both the science and black arts of speakers measure, listen and tweak to ensure their latest models will sound good both on- and off-axis, have even and controlled dispersion, and won't react too badly when placed other than ideally in the listening room.

But the way products interact with the spaces in which they're used is one of the uncontrollable variables of audio design: manufacturers can recommend where in the room we place our systems, and most notably the speakers, but products tend to be designed and tuned in purpose-built listening facilities, then used in rooms where people also have to live, watch TV and so on.

Compromises are almost inevitable when it comes to setting up a system at home: cables may be longer than ideal, and unless you're lucky enough to have a room you can clear of family and all the other clutter that impinges on an ideal listening location, the position of the speakers is more than likely to be a compromise between the ideal and domestic acceptability.

Making the most of that compromise is usually the cause of great experimentation and worry on the part of many an audio enthusiast, but the advent of various systems designed to tune the sound of a system to make the most of its performance in a



Don't worry about your listening environment: we have the technology to optimise your listening conditions, say Pioneer and others

given listening situation is one of the big audio breakthroughs of recent times, and looks set to be a growing trend as high-speed digital processing and memory becomes more affordable and accessible.

The concept is far from new, and many readers will be familiar with those graphic and parametric equalisers that were all the rage before the 'less is more' backlash consigned many of them to the dusty corners of the audiophile's attic. But the ability to tune the sound of a system with adjustments in the time domain as well as frequency has been made possible by the shift of such tuning from analogue to digital processing, and now there are systems of this kind available at various levels of the market.

Marantz set the trend back in 1991 with its AX1000 audio processor: a built-in tone generator and real-time analyser measure the characteristics of a room and then compensate for them with a parametric analyser and soundfield processor; you could even apply compression and/or limiting should you feel the need.

In more recent times TacT has marketed a range of processors offering room tuning abilities. The company was founded by Peter Lyngdorf, whose past successes include the NAD and Dali brands, not to mention the influential Hi-Fi Klubben retail chain in Scandinavia, and in recent years Lyngdorf has been a familiar face at audio shows worldwide, amazing consumers with his 'this is without, and now this is with' demonstrations of the TacT system. The current range extends from the RCS2.0 two-channel model – the designation stands for Room Correction System, and the unit is available in a variety of forms – right up to the amazing TCS MkII. This takes the system to its (current) logical conclusion, being a Theatre Correction System unit – for which read multi-channel: no fewer than 10 channels can be processed, with separate room correction parameters for each channel, and the unit handles all the current home cinema formats, including extended versions of Dolby Digital and DTS. Indeed, this unit can be used in place of a more conventional

home-cinema processor, with full control of set-up and operation via a PC connected to its RS232 interface.

You'll also need a computer to make the most of the room equalisation abilities of the TAG McLaren AV32R Dual Processor or AV192 home-cinema processor units. This TMREQ system (reviewed 12/03) can be set up by ear, or using a simple sound-pressure meter such as the Radio Shack model, but for the best results it's worth investing in the ETF5 software available from www.etfacoustic.com. Using this, a sound-pressure meter as a microphone, a soundcard and TAG McLaren's own TMREQ Wizard, available as a download from the company's website, it's easy to measure each of your speakers in turn then, using TAG's TAGtronic programming cable, upload the filter settings into the processor. The system is most effective in the lower frequencies, where it can tighten bass considerably for a much less boomy and detailed sound. As AE reported in his test, 'The effect is striking, if a little disconcerting at first. I have to admit to wondering where all the bass had gone when first I played music through the system with TMREQ activated. The answer soon became clear: it was still there, and of a much higher quality. The overall balance was tighter, cleaner and more focused, with more solid stereo imaging.'

But such room tuning and set-up systems aren't limited to high-end products such as the TacT and the £4000 TAG McLaren processor: automatic set-up systems are also available on systems aimed for mass-appeal. One of the simplest to use is the Bose AdaptIQ system, which uses a headset containing a pair of microphones plus a calibration disc. You put on the headset, connect it to a suitable Bose system and then sit in your normal listening position: using a series of test-tones the system then measures the room and sets the system up accordingly. It offers the best compromise or up to five different seating positions at a time.

A similar system, MCACC, is used by Pioneer on its AV receivers. In its simple manual



Speaker positioning need no longer be the headache it once was – thanks to B&O's Adaptive Bass Control

form this uses test-tones to allow you to set up the sound of the various speakers to match that of the front left speaker, which is used as a reference, but there's also an automatic version using a microphone which plugs into a socket on the receiver. That done, you simply run the routine and the system setups the balance and other settings for each channel,

leaving you with an optimised system within minutes. The system works on models across Pioneer's price range.

It's not just system manufacturers that have an eye to this room-tuned future. Tannoy's Eyris iDP – integrated digital processing – speakers allow complete tuning of each speaker's parameter to suit the room in which it's used, and its location

within that room, while Bang & Olufsen's mighty range-topping Beolab 5 active speakers, not content with looking like something out of a 1930s science-fiction film, have their own room-tuning. Press a button on the top of the speaker and a probe extends from the bass of the unit. A few whooping tones later and the speaker's Adaptive Bass Control – or ABC – adjusts

the low-frequency response to suit the room. And very effective it is too.

At the moment such systems are a novelty, but I'm pretty confident that situation won't last for long. As systems get networked, more digital and even wireless, allowing them to tune themselves to the room in which they're used could be audio's Next Big Thing. ●

Sony DAV-SC6

Home cinema and SACD made simpler

The latest 'home cinema in a box' package from one of the inventors of the concept is excellent, says Tony Williams

The 'home cinema in a box' market, which was more or less started by Sony's DAV-S300 system, continues to grow. Now every self-respecting major audio manufacturer is having a go.

The DAV-SC6 is one of the latest iterations of the concept: in a sleek main unit is housed a DVD-Video/SACD player which can handle CD, MP3, JPEG picture files and more, and a receiver complete with an FM RDS tuner and the latest version of Sony's S-Master digital amplification. Sony claims 6 x 100W, but this is quoted at a single frequency – 1kHz for the main speakers, 100Hz for the woofer – and at a very flattering 10 per cent total harmonic distortion.

The main unit has a Scart output to feed a television along with two line audio inputs with composite video connections to allow the likes of a video recorder or digital TV box to be connected through the system. There's even an optical digital input. Connections to the speakers are on the usual colour-coded cables, with locking plugs at the amplifier end: Sony provides generous 3.5m leads for the front speakers, 5m for the subwoofer and 10m for the rear speakers, but the plugs are removable so longer cables could be used if required. And the speakers themselves are of a slimline design, the tall front left/right speakers having floor stands which conceal the cabling, and use 7cm mid/bass drivers – two in each of the three front speakers – and 25mm dome tweeters. The subwoofer has a 16cm drive unit and a novel top-ported design.

Performance

Sony offers a full range of the most popular surround modes – the 5.1 'flavours' of Dolby Digital and DTS, plus Dolby Pro-Logic II – as well as direct playback of multichannel SACD discs, and given that the system

already 'knows' the characteristics of its speakers, setting it up involves little more than selecting the kind of TV you're using and setting the distances from listening position to speakers.

It quickly became apparent that four years of refinement has produced a system able to offer more refined dynamics, detail and impact, not to mention sufficient headroom in the volume department to allow it to fill fairly large rooms with sound. It won't quite challenge a conventional separates system costing, say, £800-1000, but then the Sony is nowhere near this kind of money.

The nearest I could get to an official price was around £600-650, but a brief web search brought up a number of online retailers selling it for considerably less. One company was selling the system for under £470 delivered, while one of the UK's leading DVD modifiers

allows it to create convincing surround ambience from the increasing number of discs of older performances. On a test-pressing of the Royal Opera House production of Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* from 1987, the Sony made a fair job of the dated video quality, while Pro-Logic II gave a kick to the adequate, but resolutely 2.0-channel audio, opening up the otherwise rather shut-in mix and improving intelligibility, not to mention the sense of the sound being locked to the TV screen.

The Sony really springs to life with a full-blown 5.1-channel recording like the 2002 Mozart *Così fan tutte* from the Staatsoper Berlin (available on TDK Mediactive). It makes clear the superiority in dynamics and clarity of the DTS soundtrack: the Dolby Digital track is smoother and warmer, but the DTS version has superior ambience to match the vibrant

Video discs, but to overlook the SACD capability of the system would be to miss one of its real charms: with an atmospheric surround recording such as the Gramophone Award-winning *La Stravaganza* from Channel Classics the Sony really shows what this format can do. A dedicated audio-only SACD player and no-compromise 5.1-channel audio system will retrieve even more from this disc, but to hear it played through the DAV-SC6 is sufficiently breathtaking an experience to convert many to the benefits of multi-channel SACD.

This, then, is another fine Sony system – even the built-in radio is rather good – and it should do well in what is now a packed 'home cinema in a box' market. It isn't the smallest, or indeed the cheapest, system of its kind, but the performance available here more than justifies the price. **C**



was offering a multi-region version, able to play discs from anywhere in the world – the unit as supplied is Region 2 only – for just under £500. In these days of online shopping it's well worth having multi-region capability.

The use of those large speakers, with their twin mid/bass drivers, has given the Sony much greater weight and authority than many systems of this kind, making it well-suited to the needs of operatic or orchestral DVDs. The Pro-Logic II processing

colour palette of the set and costumes. This is DVD music at its richest, filling the widescreen with crisp, clean images while the sound wraps around the listener to give a true 'in the theatre' experience.

It's also impressive with audio-only discs: the performance matches the best of conventional two-channel mini-systems – such as the £300 Denon D-M31 – plus even greater ability with multi-channel Super Audio CDs. Most buyers will perhaps choose the Sony for its ability with DVD-

SONY DAV-SC6

Type DVD/SACD system

Price £650

Disc formats DVD-V, SACD, CD, VCD/SVCD, CD-R/RW, MP3, JPEG

Surround formats

Dolby Digital/Pro-Logic II, DTS

Radio RDS FM/AM, 30 presets

Power output 6 x 100 W (into 4 ohms at 1 kHz with 10% THD)

Inputs 2 line audio, 2 composite video, optical digital

Outputs Video (RGB Scart, composite), line audio, six speakers, headphones

Accessories supplied

Remote handset

Dimensions (W x H x D)

main unit: 38 x 6 x 33.7cm, speakers: L/R 25 x 120 x 25cm, centre: 12.5 x 38 x 8.5cm, surrounds: 12.8 x 21.6 x 11.4cm, subwoofer: 19 x 46.6 x 35.7cm

Made by Sony, Japan

Distributed by Sony UK Ltd, The Heights, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0XW

Tel +44 (0)990 111999

web www.sony-europe.com
www.sony.co.uk

GLOSSARY

Audio terminology explained

BIAMPLIFICATION

Biamplication can improve the sound of speakers, with separate return paths from the speaker to the amplifier. You need suitable speakers (with two sets of inputs) and twin runs of cable. A pair of speakers needs two stereo amps (either an integrated amp and a suitable power amp, or a preamp and two stereo power amplifiers) and two runs of cable per speaker.

BIWIRING

This offers some of the benefits of biamping, but at a lower cost. It simply uses twin runs of cable from one amplifier to suitable biwireable speakers.

CD-R/RW

(CD-Recordable and Rewritable.) CD-Rs play in standard CD players when 'fixed up'. Rewritable discs can be reused.

COLORATION

A shift away from a natural rendition of music. Undesirable.

CROSSOVER

Splits the signal inside speakers, sending the high frequencies to the tweeter and low ones to the woofer.

DIGITAL RADIO

Digital audio on BBC radio and independents.

DAC

Digital-to-analogue converter, turning on/off pulses into analogue sound.

DOLBY DIGITAL/DTS

Rival surround sound systems which give

five or more channels of sound plus a separate channel for a subwoofer.

DOLBY

PRO-LOGIC/II

Pro-Logic extracts surround and centre-channel information from suitable sources such as VHS videos. Pro-Logic II is an enhanced version of this system, with better channel steering – its music mode works well with stereo CDs.

DVD-AUDIO

Offers surround sound music and high quality 24-bit/96kHz stereo reproduction.

DVD-VIDEO

Video format on CD-sized disc with multiple languages, widescreen pictures and multichannel surround sound. Players will also play conventional CDs.

DVD-R/RW

DVD-R recorders are now available, but there are rival formats and some doubts about the discs' compatibility with current DVD-V players.

HDCD

High Definition Compatible Digital aims for better sound from CD. Needs a suitable player.

IMPEDANCE

Low impedance speakers draw a high current from the amplifier, making them more difficult to drive.

LINE LEVEL

Describes inputs to amplifiers which don't need amplifying before the amp can use them.

MINIDISC

Sony's 64mm disc can record up to 80 minutes of sound, or more in LP modes.

OVERSAMPLING

Used in DACs, this increases signal frequency, making it easier to filter out unwanted signals.

PHONO STAGE

Record-player cartridges have low outputs: some amps have extra built-in to boost this, but many require an add-on phono amplifier.

RDS

Radio Data System: data carried on FM radio allowing text and other functions.

SUBWOOFER

A separate speaker, usually with built-in amplification, to produce very low frequencies.

SACD

Developed by Sony and Philips, Super Audio CD allows enhanced quality and also multichannel.

THX

Developed by LucasFilm, this is a set of standards which guarantee a certain quality of home cinema sound. Electronics and speakers must be made to exacting specifications.

TRANSIENTS

Sudden musical events – a cymbal crash or a snare-drum crack. Difficult to reproduce.

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Speaker driver which handles the treble.

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Larger drive unit which produces bass.

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LIVE MUSIC

CONCERT AND BROADCAST HIGHLIGHTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

GOING OUT

Performances start between 7pm and 8pm unless otherwise indicated (correct at time of going to press).

♥ denotes Editor's Choice

AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

The British musical invasion of the Concertgebouw continues with Walton from Slatkin, and Vengerov giving a rare performance on the viola.

Concertgebouw

+32 20 671 8345

www.concertgebouwamsterdam.nl

May 12, 13, 14 (8.15pm)

Prokofiev Violin Concerto No 5

Tchaikovsky Symphony No 5

Vadim Repin *vn*

Concertgebouw / Yuri Temirkanov

May 16 (8.15)

Barber Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance

Mozart Piano Concerto No 17

Walton Symphony No 2

Emanuel Ax *pf*

BBC SO / Leonard Slatkin

May 26

Bach Orchestral Suite No 2

Harpsichord Concertos in D minor and G minor

Brandenburg Concerto No 5

AAM / Richard Egarr *hpd*

May 27

Walton Viola Concerto

Elgar Enigma Variations

Maxim Vengerov *va*

RPO / Charles Dutoit

BALTIMORE, USA

Meyerhoff Symphony Hall

+1 410 783 8000

www.baltimoresymphony.org

May 14, 15, 16 (3pm)

Rossini Overture, Semiramide.

Overture, Il viaggio a Reims

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto

Schubert Symphony No 8, 'Unfinished'

Leila Josefowicz *vn*

Baltimore SO / Mario Venzago

May 27, 28, 29 (11am)

Rossini Semiramide - Overture

Beethoven Piano Concerto No 2

Bruckner Symphony No 4, 'Romantic'

Louis Lortie *pf*

Baltimore SO / Gunther Herbig

BASINGSTOKE, UK

The Anvil

+44 (0)1256 844244

www.theanvil.org.uk

May 7

Il Strauss Also sprach Zarathustra

Tchaikovsky Manfred Symphony

Bournemouth SO / Yakov Kreizberg

May 30

Holst Indra Mozart Horn Concerto

No 4. Symphony No 32

Elgar Enigma Variations

Elspeth Dutch *bn*

CBSO / Sakari Oramo

BEDFORD, UK

Corn Exchange

+44 (0)1234 269519

www.philharmonia.co.uk/

bedfordcornexchange

May 5 ♥

Sibelius Karelia - Overture

Grieg Piano Concerto

Shostakovich Symphony No 10

Simon Trpčeski *pf*

Philharmonia / Mikko Franck

BELFAST, UK

Ulster Hall

+44 (0)28 9066 8798

www.ulster-orchestra.org.uk

May 7

Stravinsky Circus Polka Prokofiev

Peter and the Wolf Saint-Saëns

Carnival of the Animals Britten The

Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra

Ulster Orchestra / Sachio Fujioka

May 21

Dvořák Carnival Overture

Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No 2

Shostakovich Symphony No 5

Louis Lortie *pf*

Ulster Orchestra / Thierry Fischer

BERLIN, GERMANY

Sally van der Meer, newly recruited, has a maestro's note - thanks to his work and his passion and a number of critically acclaimed operatic appearances - leads the BPO in a rare performance of Ludwig van Beethoven's Sinfonia

Philharmonie

+49 30 254 880

www.berliner-philharmoniker.de

May 2

Mahler Symphony No 8

Soloists include Adriane Pieczonka,

MARSHALLING FORCES FOR MAHLER 8

Those 'suns and planets revolving' which Mahler saw in his Eighth Symphony - a last fling at optimism before the last, death-obsessed works, or at one with their advanced harmonies and metaphysical standpoints? - appear in Berlin to cap Kent Nagano's adventurous season with his DSO-Berlin; next month, Rattle.



Sally Matthews *sops* Elena Manistina *mez* Robert Gambill *ten* Derlef Roth *bar* Jan-Hendrik Rootering *bass* Berlin Radio Choir; Leipzig MDR Choir; Windsbacher Youth Choir; Deutsches SO, Berlin / Kent Nagano

May 19, 20, 21 ♥

Berio Sinfonia

Berlioz Symphonie fantastique

London Voices;

BPO / Semyon Bychkov

May 14

Borodin Prince Igor - Overture

Liadov The Enchanted Lake

Shostakovich Piano Concerto No. 2

Takemitsu How slow the wind

Stravinsky The Firebird Suite

Finghin Collins *pf*

Ulster Orchestra / Tadaaki Otaka

Waterfront Hall

+44 (0)28 9033 4455

www.ulster-orchestra.org.uk

May 26

Handel Belshazzar

Susan Gritton *sop* Susan Bickley *mez*

Robin Blaze *countertenor* John Mark

Ainsley *ten* James Rutherford *bass-bar*

RIAS Chamber Choir; BPO /

Nicholas Kraemer

BIRMINGHAM, UK

The BPO continues its enlightened policy towards guest conductors by engaging 'paired' specialists to tackle Baroque and Classical repertoire. Nicholas McGegan in Bach and Thomas Hengelbrock in Mozart

Symphony Hall

+44 (0)121 780 3333

www.necgroup.co.uk/symphony

May 4 (2.15)

Haydn Symphony No 42

Mozart Sinfonia concertante K364

Tchaikovsky Serenade for Strings

Marianne Thorsen *vn* Lawrence

Power *va* CBSO / Paul Watkins

May 5

Beethoven Piano Concertos

Nos 1, 2 and 3

John Lill *pf* LPO / Walter Weller

May 6

Beethoven Piano Concertos Nos 4

and 5, 'Emperor'

John Lill *pf* LPO / Walter Weller

May 7

Smetana Má vlast - Vltava

Rodrigo Concierto de Aranjuez

Holst The Planets

Eleftheria Kotzia *gtr*

Czech National SO / Libor Pešek

May 8

Bach Orchestral Suite No 1. Cantatas

No 51, 'Jauchzet Gott in allen

Landen', and No 209 'Non sa che

sia dolore'. Orchestral Suite No 4

Gillian Keith *sop* Jonathan Holland *tp*

Kevin Gowland *fl*

CBSO / Nicholas McGegan

May 11, 12 ♥

Mozart Serenata notturna. Symphony

No 40 Haydn Harmoniemesse

City of Birmingham Symphony

Chorus; CBSO /

Thomas Hengelbrock



PAUL WATKINS first came to the public's attention as a cellist, though has since become a much in-demand conductor. This month he takes the podium at Birmingham Symphony Hall



THOMAS HENGELBROCK Put a face to the name - and an important one at that in the performance of Baroque and Classical choral music. Hengelbrock conducts the CBSO in Mozart and Haydn



JOHN LILL The popular pianist celebrates his 60th birthday with a tour and a Schumann disc (see session report and review in this issue). He plays Beethoven in Birmingham

May 13
Chopin Polonaises Op 26, Op 40 No 2 and Op 53. Four Impromptus.
 Fantasie-Impromptu **Medtner** Sonata Réminiscente in A minor Op 38
Stravinsky Petrushka Suite
 Evgeny Kissin *pf*

May 26, 27
Beethoven Piano Concerto No 4
Bruckner Symphony No 9
 Lang Lang *pf*
 CBSO / Jaap van Zweden

May 28
Mendelssohn Die schöne Melusine – Overture **Mendelssohn** Violin Concerto **Mahler** Symphony No 5
 Pekka Kuusisto *vn*
 Philharmonia / Vladimir Ashkenazy

May 29
Holst Indra **Mozart** Horn Concerto No 4. Symphony No 32 **Elgar** Enigma Variations
 Elspeth Dutch *bn*
 CBSO / Sakari Oramo

May 31
Julian Anderson Khorovod
Turnage The Torn Fields (UK première) **Cashian** Scenes from Burgos (world première) **Donatoni** Hot+
Gerald Finley bar **John Harle** sax
 Birmingham Contemporary Music Group / Alexander Briger

BOURNEMOUTH, UK

Bournemouth Pavillion
 +44 (0)1202 456456
 www.bsolive.com

May 15
 Operatic arias and duets from **Verdi's** La traviata and Rigoletto, **Bizet's** Carmen, and **Tchaikovsky's** Eugene Onegin, among others
 Patricia Rozario *sop* Peter Auty *ten*
 Bournemouth SO / Alex Ingram

BRECON, UK

Theatr Brecheiniog
 +44 (0)1874 611622
 www.bbc.co.uk/orchestras

May 28
Weber Die Freischütz – Overture
Hoddinott Trombone Concerto (world première) **Schubert** Symphony No 9, 'Great'
 Mark Eager *trbn*
 BBC NOW / Grant Llewellyn

BRISTOL, UK

Colston Hall
 +44 (0)117 922 3683
 www.colstonhall.org

May 6
R Strauss Also sprach Zarathustra
Tchaikovsky Manfred Symphony
 Bournemouth SO / Yakov Kreizberg

May 18
Smetana The Bartered Bride – Overture. Má vlast – Vltava
Dvořák Cello Concerto
Respighi The Pines of Rome
 Jiří Barta *vc*
 Czech National SO / Paul Freeman

May 22
Fauré Pavanne. Requiem
Poulenc Gloria
 Tara Harrison *sop* Christopher Purves bar Bristol Choral Society;
 Bournemouth SO / Adrian Partington

CARDIFF, UK

New Theatre
 +44 (0)29 2087 8889
 www.wno.org.uk

May 15, 21, 25
Verdi La traviata
 Cast includes: Alexia Cousin, Joseph Calleja, Christopher Purves and Eddie Wade; WNO / Tugan Sokhiev

May 24, 29
Bizet Carmen
 Cast includes: Nora Sourouzian, Camilla Roberts, Rafael Rojas and Daniel Sumegi;
 WNO / Michal Klauza

St David's Hall
 +44 (0)29 2087 8444
 www.stdavidshallcardiff.co.uk

May 7
Stravinsky Scherzo à la russe. The Firebird Suite **Barber** First Essay for Orchestra **Adams** Harmonium
Guto Puw Reservoirs (world première)
 BBC Welsh National Chorus;
 BBC NOW / Grant Llewellyn

May 13
Adams Harmonielehre (Pt 1)
Prokofiev Violin Concerto No 1
Smetana Má vlast – Vltava
Respighi The Pines of Rome
 Chloë Hanslip *vn*
 Czech National SO / Libor Pešek

CHICAGO, USA

Orchestra Hall
 +1 312 294 3000
 www.cso.org
May 6, 7, 8
Pärt Fratres **Prokofiev** Symphony No 1, 'Classical' **Mahler** Symphony No 1
 CSO / Christoph von Dohnányi

May 13, 14, 15, 18 ♥
Janáček Suite, The Cunning Little Vixen **Mozart** Piano Concerto No 25
Dvořák Symphony No 7
 Mitsuko Uchida *pf*
 CSO / Sir Charles Mackerras

May 20, 21, 22, 25
Mozart Symphonies Nos 38, 'Prague' and 35, 'Haffner' **Berg** Three Fragments from Wozzeck
Janáček Jenůfa – Soliloquy
 Angela Denoke *sop*
 CSO / Daniel Barenboim

May 27, 28, 29
Haydn Symphony No 97
R Strauss Der Rosenkavalier Suite
Brahms Piano Concerto No 1
 Daniel Barenboim *pf*
 CSO / Mariss Jansons

COVENTRY, UK

Warwick Arts Centre
 +44 (0)2476 524524
 www.bso.co.uk

May 10
Adams Harmonielehre (Part 1) **Glass** Violin Concerto **Smetana** Má vlast – Vltava **Respighi** The Pines of Rome
 Chloë Hanslip *vn*
 Czech National SO / Paul Freeman

May 11
Haydn String Quartet, Op 20 No 4
Britten Cello Suite No 3
Schubert String Quintet
 Coull Quartet, Natalie Clein *vc*
May 18, 20, 21
Mozart The Marriage of Figaro
 Rodney Clarke *Figaro* Donna Bateman *Susanna* Andrew Rupp *Count Almaviva* Julie Unwin *Countess Almaviva* Catrin Johnson *Cherubino*
 English Touring Opera / Ian Page

May 19, 22
Britten A Midsummer Night's Dream
 Rebecca Bottone *Tytania* Jonathan Kenny *Oberon* Elizabeth Atherton *Helena* Douglas Bowen *Demetrius* Serena Kay *Hermia* Hal Cazalet *Lysander* Andrew Slater *Bottom*
 English Touring Opera / Michael Rosewell

CELLISSIMO!

JETTE NELSON



Manchester throngs with cellos and cellists for five days in May

What is the collective noun for a congregation of cellists? A rainbow, perhaps, to judge from the pulsing, variegated vibrations of 147 of them arrayed on Bridgewater Hall's stage at the end of the last Manchester International Cello Festival. That was three years ago, but artistic director Ralph Kirshbaum stresses the continuity of atmosphere that the festival generates: 'Many people have been before, and those that haven't have heard a lot about it. When Ehrling [Blömdahl-Bengtsson] picks up his bow for the Saint-Saëns at the beginning of the festival, it will be like the intervening years haven't even happened.'

Kirshbaum founded the festival in 1988 after the death of Pierre Fournier, in order to fund a scholarship for young cellists: it has since become a triennial mecca for the world's cellists, and now fills five days with recitals, concerts and masterclasses. As well as the big names familiar to *Gramophone* readers like Mischa Maisky and János Starker, there are those who, like Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi and Blömdahl-Bengtsson, only appear at the fringe of the RED catalogue but are talked about with awe.

Previous festivals have covered most of the cello's standard repertoire: this year's turns to Finland and the Far East for both performers and music – so lots of new composers are also on the menu. Kirshbaum is especially taken with the civic and corporate commitment to music in Lahti, a town of 35,000 –

'about the same size as the Texas town in which I grew up' – in which 3000 children learn an instrument. 'There are so many fabulous Finnish talents, like Marko Ylönen and Jan-Erik Gustafsson – both in their early 30s. They have a complete mastery of the instrument and a musical honesty – and of course the same applies to [players from] the Far East.' He has secured the European début of the Sejong Soloists, a punchy, conductor-less string ensemble of young, mostly Asian players based around New York's Juilliard School where most of its members studied.

Amid all this performing, the important cello-making competition offers a rare insight into the interface between playing and making. This year Rocco Filippini and Sonia Wieder-Atherton are the playing judges, trying out one cello after another as the audience crane their necks to see and hear the differing qualities of the final-round instruments.

The festival's variety and vibe are overwhelming (I speak as a devotee): students (lots of them), teachers and performers dashing, chatting and listening. And of course there's all those cellos to contend with: just try not to bump into a Gofriller.

Peter Quantrill

The RNCM International Cello Festival is at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, May 5-9. Tel +44 (0)161 907 5555; e-mail boxoffice@rncm.ac.uk



PEKKA KUUSISTO
 The Finnish fiddler joins the Philharmonia and Vladimir Ashkenazy – in Birmingham and London's RFH – in concertos by Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky



PHILIP CASHIAN
 A world première from the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group for a young British composer well worth keeping an ear open for



PATRICIA ROZARIO
 Last festival season saw the soprano lead Taverner's seven-hour *Veil of the Temple*. This year she enjoys a programme of opera arias and duets in Bournemouth

DUNDEE, UK

Caird Hall

+44 (0)1382 434940
www.cairdhall.co.uk

May 26

Borodin Symphony No 2
Shostakovich Piano Concerto No 2
Rimsky-Korsakov Scheherazade
Freddy Kempf pf
RSNO / Alexander Lazarev

May 27

Last Night of the Scottish Power Proms
Judith Howarth sop **Gordon Wilson** ten
RSNO Chorus; RSNO / Garry Walker

DURHAM, UK

Gala Theatre

+44 (0)191 332 4041
www.galadurham.co.uk

May 24, 25

Mozart The Marriage of Figaro
(for details see Coventry, May 19)

May 26

Britten A Midsummer Night's Dream
(for details see Coventry, May 20)

EDINBURGH, UK

Edinburgh Festival Theatre

+44 (0)131 529 6000
www.eft.co.uk

May 27 (1.30pm), 28 (10am, 7pm),
29 (2.30pm, 7pm)

Julian Evans The Minotaur
(See Glasgow Theatre Royal)

Queens Hall

+44 (0)131 668 2019
www.sco.org.uk

May 15

Francaix Symphony in G **Britten** Les Illuminations
Vaughan Williams Five Variants of Dives and Lazarev
Ravel Mother Goose (complete)
Joan Rogers sop
SCO / Thierry Fischer

Usher Hall

+44 (0)131 228 1155
www.usherhall.co.uk

May 6

SCO (see Aberdeen, May 11)

Theatre Royal

+44 (0)141 332 9000
www.scottishopera.org.uk

May 1 (2.15pm), 25, 27, 29

Puccini La bohème
Cast includes: **Peter Auty** Rodolfo
Rachel Hynes Mimì **Roderick Williams** Marcello **Rebecca von Lipinski** Musetta
Scottish Opera / Richard Farnes

May 14, 15 (1.30pm, 7 pm), 17, 18
(10.30am, 7pm), 19 (1.30pm)

Julian Evans The Minotaur
Scottish Opera's first production created specially for children combines live performance and film animation in a tale of high adventure. Oliver Rundell conducts

GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN

Gothenburg Concert Hall

+46 (0)31 726 53 10
www.gso.se

May 6 ♥

Neeme Järvi Farewell Concerts
Sibelius Symphony No 6
Mahler Das Lied von der Erde
Jorma Silvasti ten **Karl-Magnus Fredricksson** bar
Gothenburg SO / Neeme Järvi

May 14 (6pm), 15 (3pm)

R Strauss An Alpine Symphony
Vähi Chant of the Celestial Lake
Stenhammar Symphony No 1
Maarika Järvi fl
Gothenburg SO / Neeme Järvi

GREENOCK, UK

Town Hall

+44 (0)1475 234234
www.sco.org.uk

May 14

SCO (see Edinburgh, Queens Hall,
May 15)

INVERNESS, UK

Eden Court

+44 (0)1463 234234
www.eden-court.co.uk

May 5

SCO (see Aberdeen, May 8)

LEEDS, UK

Operatic rarities aplenty ■ Opera North
unearth some curios and delights
when did you last hear Bizet's *Djamileh*
or Zemlinsky's *The Dwarf*?

Grand Theatre

+44 (0)113 243 9999
www.operanorth.co.uk

May 6, 21 (both 8.45pm), 22
(9pm)

Rossini Love's Luggage Lost
Majella Cullagh *Berenice* **Iain Paton**
Count Alberto **Mark Stone** *Don*
Parmenione **Kim-Marie Woodhouse**
Ernestina Opera North / David Parry

May 6, 18, 21, 22 (2pm)

Puccini Il Tabarro
Nina Pavlovski *Giorgetta* **Susan Gorton** *La Frugola* **Leonardo Capalbo**
Luigi **Jonathan Summers** *Michele*
Opera North / Martin André

EIGHT TIMES ONE EQUALS FUN

One-act operas can pack an emotional punch out of proportion to their length: Opera North has cunningly planned a mini-season of eight of them for Leeds, Salford, Newcastle, Nottingham and London. Included are favourites like *La Vida Breve* and *I Pagliacci*, but also rarities including Zemlinsky's tragic *The Dwarf*.

May 7, 13 (both 9pm) 15 (2pm),
17 (7.15), 19 (9pm)

Leoncavallo *Pagliacci*
Cast includes: **Geraint Dodd** *Canio*
Majella Cullagh *Nedda* **Jonathan Summers** *Tonio*
Opera North / David Parry

May 7, 13, 15, 19

Rachmaninov *Francesca de Rimini*
Nina Pavlovski *Francesca* **Jeffrey Lloyd-Roberts** *Paolo/Dante* **Jonathan Summers** *Malatesta/Ghost of Virgil*
Opera North / Martin André

May 14, 15 (9pm), 20

Bizet *Djamileh*
Paul Nilon *Haroun* **Mark Stone**
Splendiano **Patricia Bardon** *Djamileh*
Opera North / David Parry

May 14 (8.45), 15 (3.30), 17, 20
(both 8.45pm)

Weill *The Seven Deadly Sins*
Rebecca Caine *Anna* / **Beate Vollock**

Anna **Iain Paton** *Tenor* / **Nicholas Sharratt** *Tenor* **Adrian Clarke** *Father*
Graeme Broadbent *Mother*
Opera North / James Holmes

May 18 (8.45), 22 (3.30pm)

Falla *La Vida breve*
Cast includes: **Mary Plazas** *Salud*
Susan Gorton *Grandmother*
Kim-Marie Woodhouse *Carmela*
Leonardo Capalbo *Paco*
Opera North / Martin André

May 22 ♥

Zemlinsky *The Dwarf*
Stafanie Krahenfeld *Donna Clara*
Majella Cullagh *Ghita* **Paul Nilon**
Dwarf **Graeme Broadbent** *Don Estoban*
Opera North / David Parry

LEICESTER, UK

De Montfort Hall

+44 (0)116 233 3111
www.demontforhall.co.uk

May 12

Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet*,
Fantasy Overture **Prokofiev** *Violin*
Concerto No 2 **Shostakovich**
Symphony No 10
Viktoria Mullova vn
Philharmonia / Mikko Franck

LIVERPOOL, UK

Philharmonic Hall

+44 (0)151 709 3789
www.liverpoolphil.com

May 5, 6

Mozart *Requiem*
Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*
Carolyn Sampson sop **Susan Bickley**
mez **Mark Padmore** ten **Neal Davies**
bass Royal Liverpool Philharmonic
Choir; RLPO / Gerard Schwarz



JOHNNY CARR

May 13

Britten *Four Sea Interludes* and
Passacaglia from *Peter Grimes* **Bruch**
Violin Concerto No 1 **Takemitsu**
Dreamtime **Debussy** *La mer*
Henning Kraggerud vn
RLPO / Kazushi Ono

May 20

Works by **Cornish**, **Henry VIII**, **Gavin Bryars** (From the First Book of Madrigals), **Jan Steele**, **Peter Erskine** (*Romeo and Juliet*), **MacMillan** (*Tuireadh*), **Raskatov** (*Obikhod*)
Hilliard Ensemble; Ensemble 10.10 / Clark Rundell

May 22

David Horne *Concerto for Orchestra*
(world première) **Bright Sheng** *China*
Dreams **MacMillan** *Quickening*
Hilliard Ensemble; Royal Liverpool
Philharmonic Choir; Liverpool
Philharmonic Youth Choir; RLPO / Clark Rundell

LONDON, UK

Gergiev and the LSO provide a rare opportunity ■ hear all of **Prokofiev's** symphonies: a thrilling prospect given the conductor's seat-of-the-pants style and the LSO's incandescent current form. And if that's all a bit hectic, there's **Verdi's** last opera, *Falstaff*, lovingly tended to by Sir Colin Davis (to be recorded for LSO Live)

Barbican Hall

+44 (0)20 7382 7297
www.barbican.org.uk

May 1

Prokofiev Symphonies Nos 1, 'Classical', 2 and 3
LSO / Valery Gergiev

May 2, 6

Prokofiev Symphonies Nos 4 and 5
LSO / Valery Gergiev

May 5, 8 ♥

Prokofiev Symphonies Nos 6 and 7
LSO / Valery Gergiev

May 4

Handel *Suite in F*
Haydn *Cello Concerto in D*,
Symphony No 83, 'La Poule'
Vivaldi *Cello Concerto in C minor*
Yo-Yo Ma vc **Amsterdam Baroque**
Orchestra / Ton Koopman

May 7 ♥

Mozart *An Chloe. Abendempfindung*
Fauré *Melodies* **Ravel** *Five Greek*
Songs **Handel** *Arias from Semele*,
American Folk Songs (arr Kohn)
David Daniels countertenor
Martin Katz pf

May 12

Mozart *Piano Concerto No 20*
Shostakovich *Symphony No 11*,
'The Year 1905' **Emanuel Ax** pf
BBC SO / Leonard Slatkin

May 17, 20, 23

Verdi *Falstaff*
Cast includes: **Michele Pertusi** *Falstaff*
Carlos Alvarez *Ford* **Ana Ibarra** *Nadal*
Alice Ford *Marina* **Domashenko** *Meg*
Page *Jane* **Henschel** *Mistress Quickly*
Maria José Moreno *Nannetta* **Bülent**
Bezdüz *Fenton* London Symphony
Chorus; LSO / Sir Colin Davis

May 21

Schoenberg *Verklärte Nacht*
Mahler *Symphony No 1*
Philadelphia Orchestra /
Christoph Eschenbach

May 22

Brahms *Violin Concerto*
Shostakovich *Symphony No 10*
Gil Shaham vn **Philadelphia**
Orchestra / Christoph Eschenbach

May 26

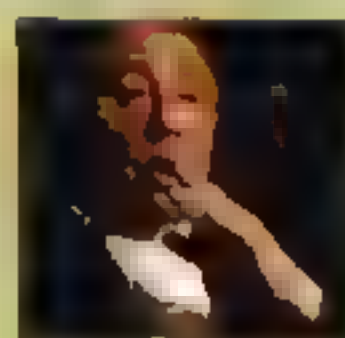
Smirnov LSO Centenary Concertante
Mahler *Symphony No 2, 'Resurrection'*
Laura Claycomb sop **Michelle**
DeYoung mez London Symphony
Chorus; LSO / Sir Andrew Davis

Coliseum

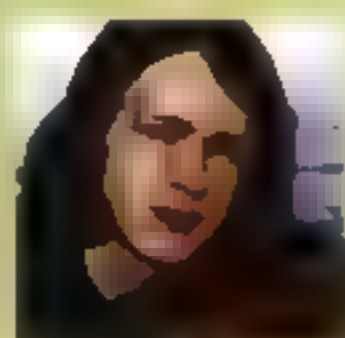
+44 (0)20 7632 8300
www.eno.org

May 1 (6.30pm), May 6

Sullivan *The Mikado*
Cast includes: **Richard Stuart**,
Eric Roberts *Ko-Ko* **Bonnaventura**
Bottone *Nanki-Poo* **Jeni Bern** *Yum-Yum*
Ian Caddy *Peep-Bo* **Francis**
McCafferty *Katisha* **Richard Angas**,
Mark Richardson *The Mikado*
ENO / Gareth Jones



NEEME JÄRVI bids farewell his Gothenburg orchestra with two typically imaginative programmes – on May 6 you can catch Mahler's suitably valedictory *Das Lied von der Erde*



HENNING KRAGGERUD Bruch's First Violin Concerto – the unshakeable favourite of Classic FM listeners – comes courtesy of this dynamic young Norwegian at an RLPO concert



VALERY GERGIEV The dynamic Russian maestro joins the LSO for a three-part Prokofiev symphony celebration at the Barbican (and also live on Radio 3)



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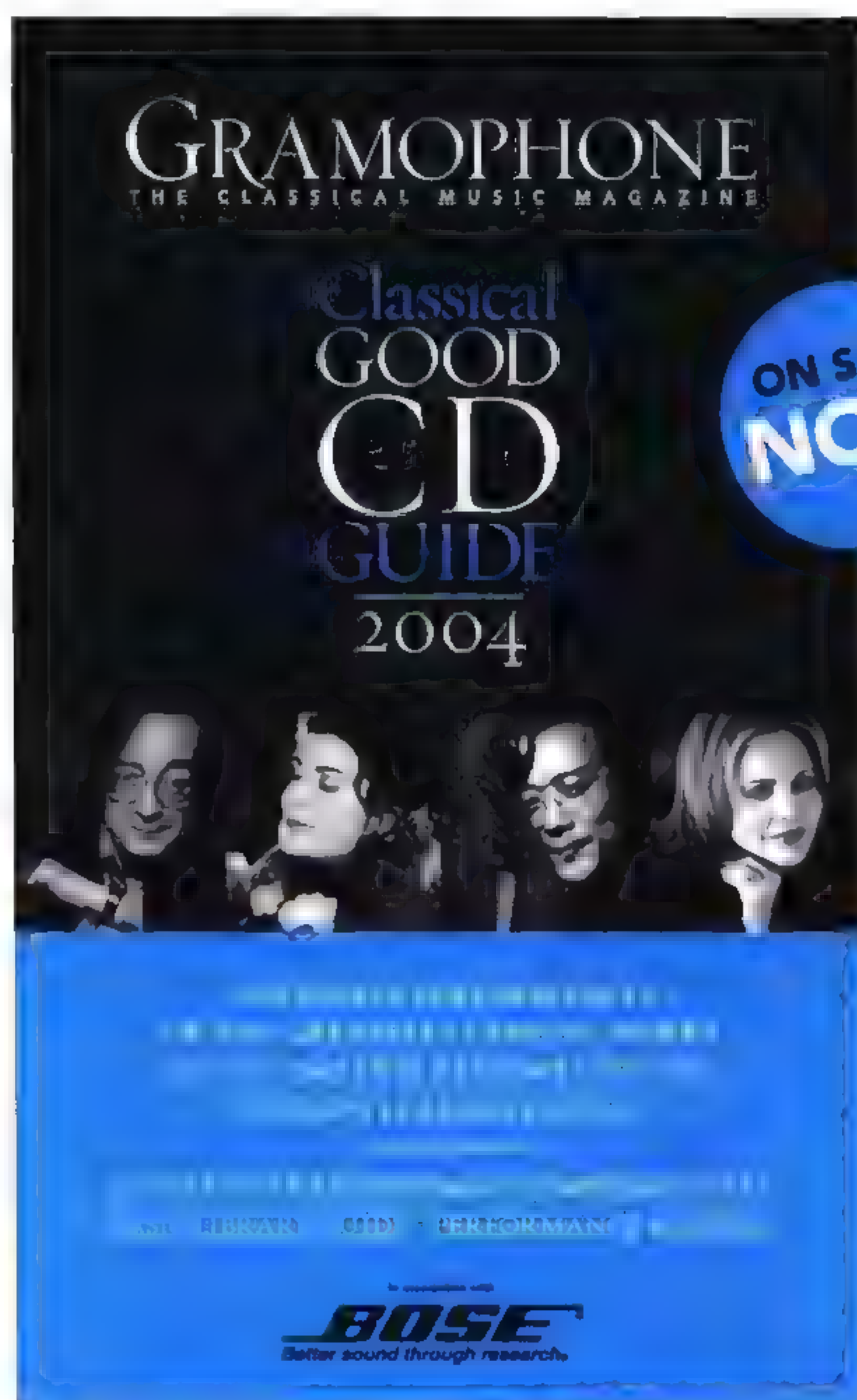


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May 8 (4pm), 11 (5pm), 15 (4pm), 18 (5pm), 22 (4pm), 26 (5pm), 29 (4pm)

Wagner The Valkyrie
Cast includes: **Pär Lindskog** *Siegfried*
Orla Boylan *Sieglinde* **Clive Bayley**
Hunding **Robert Hayward** *Wotan*
Susan Parry *Fricka* **Kathleen**
Broderick *Briemhilde* **ENO** / **Paul**
Daniel, Alex Ingram (May 26)

London Handel Festival
www.london-handel-festival.com
Duke's Hall,
Royal Academy of Music

May 11
Handel Hercules
Lucy Crowe *Isle* **Michael George**
Hercules **Daniel Taylor** *Lichas* **Renata**
Pokupic *Dejanira* **Edward Lyon** *Hylas*
London Handel Choir and Orchestra
/ Laurence Cummings

South Bank Centre
+44 (0)20 7960 4242
www.sbc.org.uk

Royal Festival Hall
Two staggering young talents join the
Philharmonia this month – together
on May 6 as wunderkind pianist Simon
Trpčeski joins the youthful Mikko Franck,
and conductor alone on May 13

May 5
R Strauss Four Last Songs
Mahler Symphony No 9
Christine Schäfer *sop*
RPO / **Daniele Gatti**

May 6 ♥
Sibelius Karelia – Overture
Grieg Piano Concerto
Shostakovich Symphony No 10
Simon Trpčeski *pf*
Philharmonia / **Mikko Franck**

May 13
Tchaikovsky Romeo and Juliet,
Fantasy Overture, Symphony No 5
Prokofiev Violin Concerto No 2
Viktoria Mullova *vn*
Philharmonia / **Mikko Franck**

May 16
Beethoven Missa solemnis
Janice Watson *sop* **Anna Larsson** *mez*
Thomas Studebaker *ten* **Franz-Josef**
Selig *bass* London Philharmonic
Choir; LPO / **Kurt Masur**

May 18
Evgeny Kissin *pf* (for programme see
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, May 13)

May 20
Mozart Symphony No 40,
Piano Concerto No 23
Bartók Concerto for Orchestra
Joanna MacGregor *pf*
RPO / **Daniele Gatti**

May 21
Beethoven Symphony No 8
Shostakovich Piano Concerto No 1
Brahms Serenade No 2 in A
Steven Osborne *pf* **Paul Beniston** *tpt*
LPO / **Luke Dollman, Alan**
Buribayev, Joana Carneiro

May 22
Bach 8 minor Mass
Malin Hartelius *sop* **Monica Groop**
mez **Lothar Odinius** *ten* **Hanno**
Muller-Brachman *bass* Philharmonia
Voices; Philharmonia / **András Schiff**

May 25
Vaughan Williams Wasps Overture
Walton Viola Concerto **Ravel** Tzigane
Elgar Enigma Variations
Maxim Vengerov *va, vn*
RPO / **Charles Dutoit**

May 27
Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto
Mahler Symphony No 5
Pekka Kuusisto *vn*
Philharmonia / **Vladimir Ashkenazy**

May 30
Brahms Academic Festival Overture
Haydn Trumpet Concerto
Tchaikovsky Swan Lake – excs
Mark David *tpt*
Philharmonia / **Vladimir Ashkenazy**

May 4 (6.30pm) ♥
Biber The Mystery Sonatas
Pavlo Besnosiuk *vn* **Paula**
Chateaufort *chit/alte* **David Robleau**
hpd/org **Richard Tunnicliffe** *va da*
gamba **Timothy West** *narr*

May 7
Ibert Trois pièces brèves
Poulenc Trio, Sextet **Saint-Saëns**
Caprice sur des airs danois et russes
Francaix L'heure de Berger
Roussel Divertissement
Tansman Danse de la Sorcière
London Mozart Players Chamber
Ensemble / **Pascal Rogé** *pf*

May 9
'Les Délices d'un Roi' – Music for
Versailles by **Lalande, Corelli,**
Bernier, Royer and **Rameau**
Emma Kirkby, Helen Groves *sops*
Andrew Kennedy *countertenor*
Jacques Imbrailo *bar*
Catherine Mackintosh *vn*
Nonsuch Singers and Baroque
Orchestra / **Graham Caldwell**

BIBER MASS REVIVED

Biber's Missa Christi
Resurgentis, unperformed since
its 1670s composition, cele-
brates both the Resurrection
of Christ and also the rather
more worldly event of the
elevation of the Archbishop of
Salzburg's nephew to a bish-
opric. Andrew Manze conducts
The English Concert at the
Wigmore Hall on May 25.

May 12
Duddell New work
Copland Clarinet Concerto
Mendelssohn String Symphony No 1
Nicholas Cox *cl*
London Strings / **Richard Llewellyn**

May 14
Bartók Divertimento **Mozart** Violin
Concerto No 4 **Szőllősy** Addio
Tchaikovsky Souvenir de Florence
György Pauk *vn*
Franz Liszt CO / **János Rolla**

May 19
Mozart Symphony No 13, Piano
Concerto No 27 **Howe** Sand, Stars
and Spring **Daniels** Deep Forest
Ambache CO

May 27
Songs and arias, including **Handel**
Lascia ch'io pianga **Bellini** Norma –
Cavatina **Catalani** La Wally – Ebben?
Ne andro lontana **Gounod** Faust –
Jewel Song **Verdi** Otello – Ave maria;

Aida – Ritorna vincitor; **La Forza del**
Destino – Pace, pace
Inessa Galante *sop* **Roger Vignoles** *pf*

Wigmore Hall
+44 (0)20 7935 2141
www.wigmorehall.org.uk

May 1
The Hilliard Ensemble 30th Anniversary
Celebrations conclude with an early
music/contemporary programme of
Bach and Arvo Pärt

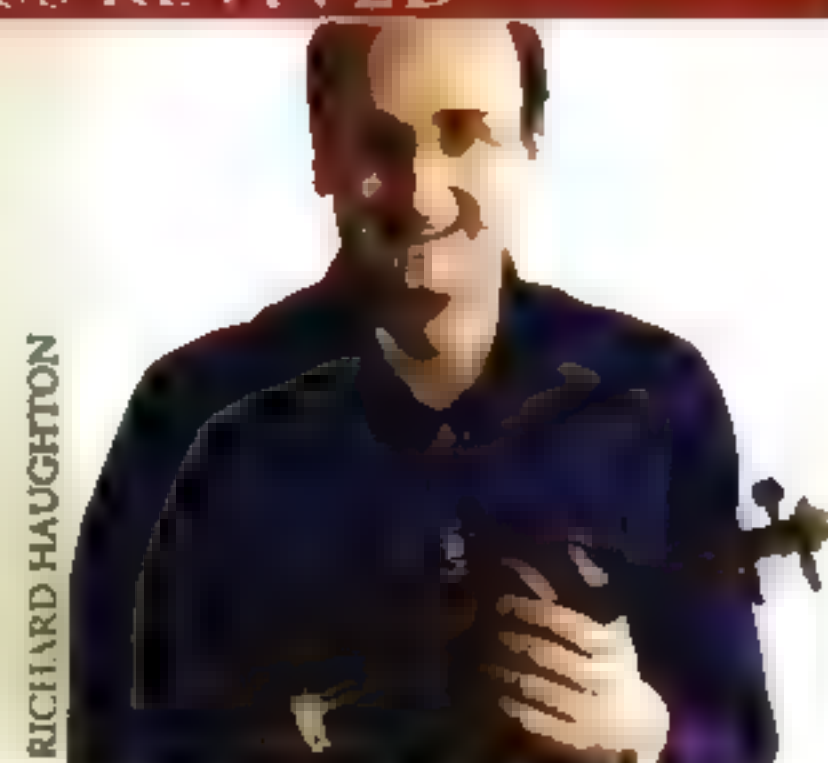
May 6
Brahms Liebeslieder Waltes I and II
Classes by **Matthias Goerne** with four
young singers (on May 4, 5) culminate
in a performance of the Brahms.
Singers include **Emillie Pictet** *sop*
Stefanie Irányi *mez* **Tyler Duncan** *bar*
with **Christian Schamarel, Volker**
Hiemeyer, Alexander Schmalcz *pfs*

May 8
Songs by **Beethoven, II Strauss**
and **Mahler** Kindertotenlieder
Matthias Goerne *bar*
Alexander Schmalcz *pf*

May 11
Dvořák Bagatelles, String Quartet
No 14 **Bodorov** Dignitas Homini
Martinů String Quartet No 7
Skampa Quartet, **Simon Crawford-**
Phillips *harm*

May 12
Songs by **Kozeluch, Schumann,**
Poulenc, Debussy (Chansons de
Bilitis), **Novak, Janáček, Mahler**
(from Des Knaben Wunderhorn)
Magdalena Kožená *mez*
Malcolm Martineau *pf*

May 16
The themes of Schumann's song cycle
Frauenliebe und -leben expanded into a
lieder recital. **Felicity Lott** sings the cycle



RICHARD HAUGHTON

and **Angelika Kirschschrager** performs
Loewe's settings of the same poems,
together with songs and duets by
Mendelssohn, Brahms and **Wolf**
Dame Felicity Lott *sop* **Angelika**
Kirschschrager *mez* **Graham Johnson** *pf*

May 20
Bach Sonatas Nos 4 and 6 for violin
and harpsichord. Sonata No 2 and
Partita No 2 for solo violin
Viktoria Mullova *vn*
Ottavio Dantone *hpd*

May 25 ♥
Biber A new Mass for Easter –
the Missa Christi Resurgentis,
unperformed since the 1670s
Choir of The English Concert; **The**
English Concert / **Andrew Manze**

LOS ANGELES, USA

Walt Disney Hall
+1 323 850 2000
www.wdch.LAPhil.com

Esa-Pekka's enlightened policy to reper-
toire and guest artists means a varied
and various diet from Los Angeles.
Look out for a de luxe lineup for the
MacDowell Second Piano Concerto

May 6, 7, 8 (2pm) & 9
Bernstein Fancy Free Suite (not on
May 7) **Corigliano** Violin Concerto,
'The Red Violin' **Elgar** Enigma
Variations
Joshua Bell *vn*
Los Angeles PO /
Miguel Harth-Bedoya

May 9
Bach Goldberg Variations
András Schiff *pf*

May 14, 15, 16 (2pm)
Copland Symphonic Ode
MacDowell Piano Concerto No 2
Dvořák Symphony No 9, 'From the
New World'
André Watts *pf*
Los Angeles PO / **Robert Spano**

May 21, 22 & 23 (2pm)
Lindberg New work
Sibelius Violin Concerto,
Symphony No 5
Los Angeles PO / **Esa-Pekka Salonen**

May 28, 29 & 30 (2pm)
Lim New work
Mozart Piano Concerto No 19, K459
Brahms Symphony No 2
Mitsuko Uchida *pf*
Los Angeles PO / **Esa-Pekka Salonen**

MANCHESTER, UK

Bridgewater Hall
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www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk

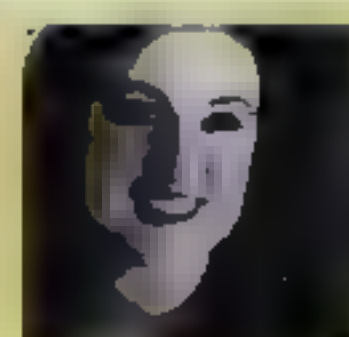
May 5
Saint-Saëns Cello Concerto
Takemitsu Orion and Pleides
Kalevi Aho Double Concerto (BBC
commission, world premiere)
Lindberg Cello Concerto **Tchaikovsky**
Variations on a Rococo Theme
Erling Blöndal-Bengtsen, Tsuyoshi
Tsutsumi, Frans Helmerson, Jan-
Erik Gustafsson, Anssi Karttunen,
Alexander Rudin *vs*
BBC Philharmonic / **Rumon Gamba**
Part of the RNCM International Cello
Festival

May 6
Delius A Song of Summer, Cynara.
Dvořák Symphony No 9, 'From the
New World' **Webern** Im Sommerwind
Mahler Lieder eines fahrenden
Gesellen
Thomas Hampson *bar*
Hallé / **Mark Elder**

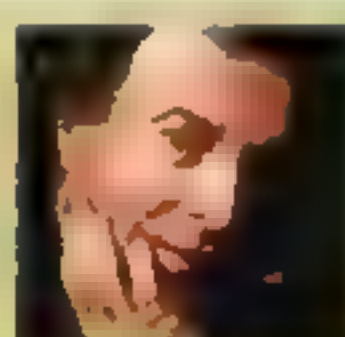
May 8
Tchaikovsky Eugene Onegin –
Lensky's Aria **Kokkonen** Cello
Concerto **Penderecki** Concerto
for Three Cellos **Beethoven** Triple
Concerto
Cho Liang-Lin *vn* **Misha Maisky,**
Arto Noras, Boris Pergamenschikov,
Han-Na Chang, Claudio Bohorquez,
Ralph Kirshbaum *vs* **Imogen Cooper**
pf BBC Philharmonic / **Vassily**
Sinaisky, Krzysztof Penderecki

May 9 ♥
Weber Der Freischütz – Overture
Haydn Symphony No 73, 'La Chasse'
Janáček Glagolitic Mass
Stephanie Friede *sop* **Ann Taylor** *mez*
Adrian Thompson *ten* **Brindley**
Sherratt *bass* **Darius Batiwalla** *org*
Hallé Choir, Hallé / **Mark Elder**

May 10
Evgeny Kissin *pf* (for programme see
Birmingham, Synphony Hall, May 13)



ORLA BOYLAN
The young Irish soprano's
star burns ever brighter
as she returns to ENO to
reprise her well-received
Sieglinde in Paul Daniels'
The Valkyrie



ANDRÁS SCHIFF
The cooler-than-a-cucumber
pianist and master colourist
back in love with Bach,
revisits the Goldbergs in
LA for an evening of
sublime music-making



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returns to Wigmore Hall
with an enterprising
programme of Dvořák,
Bodorov and Martinů

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MONIUSZKO The Haunted Manor - Polish Nat Opera/Kaspszyk	2CDs	5574892 £18.75
PART Slabat Mater, Summa etc - Daniel Taylor/Stud.Ancie.Montreal - spec.price	ACD22310	£8.75
MONTEVERDI Sacred Music Vol.2 - King's Consort	CDA67438	£11.95
PROKOFIEV Sonatas 4 & 6, R&J Suite - Lugansky - Ltd qty	2564 612552	£10.00
RAVEL Scheherazade, Debussy Ballades de Villon - Von Otter/Cleveland/Boulez	4716142	£11.95
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SCHUMANN String Quartets Op.41 - Ysaye Quartet	AECD0418	£12.50
CYRIL SCOTT Symphony No.1, Pno Conc 2 etc. - Shelley/BBC Phil/Brabbins	CHAN10211	£12.00
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LIVE MUSIC

May 12
Berlioz Le Carnaval romain - Overture
Mendelssohn Violin Concerto
Shostakovich Symphony No 5
Sergey Khachatryan *tr*
Hallé / Stanislaw Skrowaczewski

May 19
Smetana The Bartered Bride - Overture
Dvořák Cello Concerto
Holst The Planets Jiří Barta *tr*
Czech National SO / Libor Pešek

May 25
Pieces by **Barrios**, **Bach**, **Albéniz**, **Sculthorpe**, **Domeniconi**, **Figueredo**, **Canonico**, **Carillo**, **López**, **Riera**, **Lauro**, **Fernández** and **Borges**
John Williams *gtr*

May 29
Tchaikovsky The Queen of Spades (concert performance)
Soloists of the Mariinsky Theatre (Kirov Opera) **BBC Singers**; **BBC Philharmonic** / **Gianandrea Noseda**

Royal Northern College of Music

May 5-9
The eighth RNCM Manchester International Cello Festival goes on a journey through the music of Finnish composers, together with music from Japan, China, Korea and Azerbaijan in masterclasses and concerts, plus two main evening concerts and a late-evening concert at the Bridgewater Hall

NEW YORK, USA

A long-awaited NYPO debut for Gramophone's current Artist of the Year **Marin Alsop** as she guides a de luxe cast through the ever-inventive *Candide* by her conducting mentor, **Leonard Bernstein**. And hang around for some suitably celebratory concerts of **Charles Ives** music. May 19 marks the 50th anniversary of his death in New York under **David Robertson** and **John Adams**

Avery Fisher Hall

+1 212 875 5656
www.newyorkphilharmonic.org

May 5, 6 (Gala Benefit), 7, 8 ♥
Bernstein *Candide* (Concert version)
Kristin Chenoweth *sop* **Paul Groves** *ten* **Sir Thomas Allen** *bar* **Patricia Lupone** *mrg* Westminster Symphonic Choir; NYPO / **Marin Alsop**

May 11, 13
Ives/Schuman Variations on 'America' *Ives* Decoration Day. Washington's Birthday **Copland** Piano Concerto **Debussy** Nuages. Fêtes **Varèse** Arcana **Garrick Ohlsson** *pf*
NYPO / **David Robertson**

May 21, 22, 25 ♥
Ives Country Band March. Ragtime Dance No 4. Fugue: From Greenland's Icy Mountains. Over the Pavements **Ives/Adams** Down East. Serenity. At the River **Adams** Easter Eve 1945. Harmonium. Songs by **Cannon**, **Gershwin**, **Harris** and **Berlin** **Audra McDonald** *sop* **Choral Arts Society**, Washington; NYPO / **John Adams**

Carnegie Hall

+1 212 247 7800
www.carnegiehall.org

May 21
R Strauss Oboe Concerto
Ravel Don Quichotte à Dulcinée
Mahler Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen
Beethoven Symphony No 7
Dmitri Hvorostovsky *bar* **Elaine Douvas** *ob* Metropolitan Opera Orchestra / **James Levine**

May 23 (3pm)
Berg Violin Concerto
Mahler Symphony No 9
Christian Tetzlaff *tr* Metropolitan Opera Orchestra / **James Levine**

NOTTINGHAM, UK

St Mary's Church
+44 (0)115 941 9419

May 30
Biber Missa Salisburgensis
The UK's largest parish church is the setting for one of the grandest orchestral and choral works of the 17th century
St Mary's Church Choir; **English Pro Musica** / **John Keys**

OSLO, NORWAY

Concert Hall
+47 2201 4900
www.oslophil.com

May 6, 7
Svendson Symphony No 2
Mozart Piano Concerto No 17
R Strauss Till Eulenspiegel
Vebjørn Anvik *pf*
Oslo PO / **Eivind Aadland**

May 27, 28
Mozart Symphonies Nos 29, 39 and 40 **Oslo PO** / **André Previn**

PETERBOROUGH, UK

Peterborough Cathedral
+44 (0)115 941 9419

May 29
Biber Missa Salisburgensis (see Nottingham for details)

PERTH, UK

Perth Theatre
+44 (0)1738 621031
www.perththeatre.co.uk

May 28
Mozart The Marriage of Figaro (for details see Coventry, May 19)

May 29
Britten A Midsummer Night's Dream (for details see Coventry, May 20)

PHILADELPHIA, USA

Verizon Hall
+1 215 893 1999
www.philorch.org

May 6, 7 (2pm), 8 ♥
Messiaen Les Offrandes oubliées
Bruckner Symphony No 7
Philadelphia Orchestra / **Christoph Eschenbach**

PITTSBURGH, USA

Heinz Hall
+1 (412) 392-4900
www.pittsburghsymphony.org

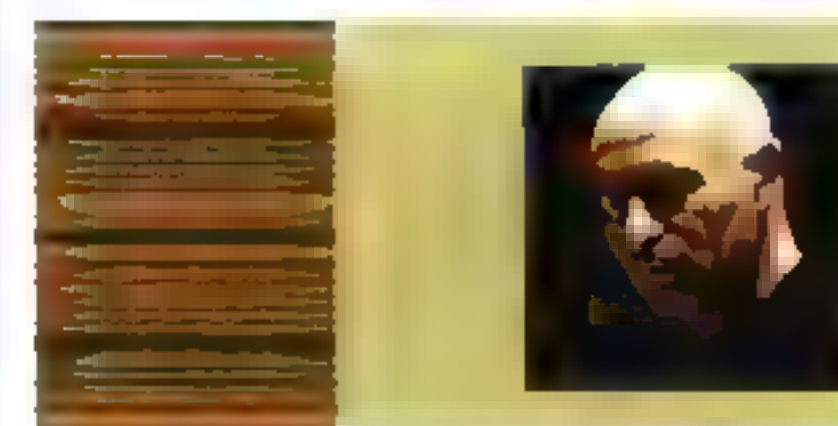
May 21, 22, 23 (2.30pm)
Mariss Jansons's final concerts
Schoenberg Verklärte Nacht
Beethoven Symphony No 9, 'Choral'
Jane Eaglen *sop* **Michelle DeYoung** *mez* **Thomas Studebaker** *ten* **Franz-Josef Selig** *bass* Mendelssohn Choir; Pittsburgh SO / **Mariss Jansons**

POOLE, UK

The Lighthouse
+44 (0)1202 685222
www.lighthousepoole.co.uk

May 5
R Strauss Also sprach Zarathustra
Tchaikovsky Manfred Symphony
Bournemouth SO / **Yakov Kreizberg**

May 12
Sibelius Pelléas et Mélisande
Mozart Piano Concerto No 15
Prokofiev Romeo and Juliet - excs **Leon McCawley** *pf*
Bournemouth SO / **Paul Daniel**



CHRISTOPH ESCHENBACH

A conductor with a fervent belief in the music of last century offers three nicely balanced programmes in London (Barbican) and at home in Philadelphia

PORTSMOUTH, UK

Guildhall

+44 (0)23 9282 4355
www.portsmouthguildhall.co.uk

May 13

Bournemouth SO (see Poole, May 12)

SAN FRANCISCO, USA

Bravo Jean-Yves Thibaudet and M. J. for learning the Dussek Piano Concerto the contrapuntist in an imaginative SFSO programme - on May 21 & 22

Davies Symphony Hall

+1 415 864 6000
www.sfsymphony.org

May 2

Bach Brandenburg Concerto No 5.
Keyboard Concerto BWV1055
Mendelssohn Piano Concerto No 1.
Symphony No 4, 'Italian'
Chamber Orchestra of Europe /
András Schiff pf

May 3

Bach Orchestral Suites Nos 2 and 3.
Piano Concerto No 5
Mendelssohn A Midsummer Night's
Dream (excerpts). Piano Concerto No 2
Chamber Orchestra of Europe /
András Schiff pf

May 21, 22

Reicha Overture in D
Dussek Piano Concerto
Beethoven Symphony No 7
Jean-Yves Thibaudet pf
SFSO / Michael Tilson Thomas

May 27, 28

Beethoven Fidelio (semi-staged)
Tina Kiberg *Leonore* Robert Gambill
Florestan Paul Pliska *Rocco* Anna
Christy Marzelle *Eric* Cutler
Jacquino San Francisco Symphony
Chorus; SFSO / Michael Tilson
Thomas

SHEFFIELD, UK

The Lyceum

+44 (0)114 249 6000
www.englishtouringopera.org.uk

May 10, 11

Mozart The Marriage of Figaro
(for details see Coventry, May 19)

May 12

Britten A Midsummer Night's Dream
(for details see Coventry, May 20)

SOUTHAMPTON, UK

Turner Sims Concert Hall

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May 9

Dvořák Drobosti. String Quartet
No 10. Piano Quintet
Melvyn Tan pf Skampa Quartet

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Opera House Concert Hall

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May 19, 20 (1.30pm), 21, 22

Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto
Stravinsky The Rite of Spring
Salvatore Accardo vn
Sydney SO / Gianluigi Gelmetti

May 27 (1.30pm), May 28,
May 29 (2pm)

Brahms Double Concerto
Beethoven Symphony No 7
Salvatore Accardo vn Mario Brunello
vc Sydney SO / Gianluigi Gelmetti

TORONTO, CANADA

Roy Thompson Hall

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www.tso.ca

May 1

Ravel Mother Goose Suite.
Piano Concerto for the Left Hand

Mendelssohn Symphony No 5,

'Reformation'

Jean-Yves Thibaudet pf

Toronto SO / Stéphane Denève

May 19, 20

Wagner Siegfried Idyll
Bruckner Symphony No 4, 'Romantic'
Toronto SO / Gunther Herbig

May 26, 27

Schnittke Concerto grosso No 1
Rachmaninov Rhapsody on a Theme
of Paganini Tchaikovsky Symphony
No 2, 'Little Russian'
Mark Skaznitsky, Mark André
Savoie vs Jon Kimura Parker pf
Toronto SO / Hugh Wolff

VANCOUVER, CANADA

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May 1, 3

Strauss Waltz, Music of the Spheres
O'Leary New work (CBC commission,
world premiere) Rachmaninov
Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini
Holst The Planets
Avan Yu pf Elektra Women's Choir;
Vancouver Youth SO /
Bramwell Tovey

May 8, 10

Oliver New work (VSO commission,
world premiere) Grieg Piano Concerto
Dvořák Symphony No 7
Alon Goldstein pf
Vancouver SO / Christian Arming

May 17

Dvořák Carnival Overture. Cello
Concerto Haydn Cello Concerto in C
Yo-Yo Ma vc
Vancouver SO / Bramwell Tovey

May 29, 31

R Strauss Don Juan. Four Last Songs
Wagner Overture, Tannhäuser. Tristan
und Isolde: Prelude and Liebestod
Jane Eaglen sop
Vancouver SO / Bramwell Tovey

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

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May 8 (3pm), 10

Schoenberg Gurrelieder
Luana de Vol Tove Waltraud Meier
Waldemar Johan Botha Waldemar Kurt
Azesberger Klaus/narr Thomas
Quasthoff Bauer Vienna Singverein;
Vienna Chamber Choir; Viennensis
Chorus; VPO / Mariss Jansons

May 22 (3pm), 11 (11am), 24

Mozart Symphony No 35, 'Haffner'
Orff Carmina Burana
Ruth Ziesak sop Andreas Scholl count-
erten Simon Keenlyside bar Vienna
Singverein; VPO / Riccardo Muti

Opera House

May 18

Berlioz Requiem
Torsten Kerl ten Vienna State Opera
Chorus; VPO / Seiji Ozawa

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May 21

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Scarlatti The Sixteen

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Paul Watkins: SASHA GUSOV; Thomas Hengelbrock: BIK / J TSCHARYISKI;

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Patricia Rozario: SHEILA ROCK; Neeme Järvi: ANNA HULT;

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András Schiff: SHEILA ROCK; Skampa Quartet: IVAN PINKAVA

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April 5-9 (10am) BBC R3
CD Masters

This week's delve into the archive explores the world of operetta, through the music of Offenbach and Lehár, among others. Clara Haskil is the featured artist.

April 6 (7.30pm) BBC R3
 The **Genius of the Violin** festival concludes with a gala concert. Confirmed works so far include Corelli's *La Folia*, and Wieniawski's *Polanaise No 1*. Ida Haendel and the Chris Garrick Quartet perform.

April 8 (7.30pm) BBC R3
 Stephen Cleobury leads the choir of King's College Cambridge, the BBC Concert Orchestra and the BBC Singers in Mozart's version of **Handel's Messiah**.

April 8 (8pm) Artsworld
 One of several offerings from Artsworld this month looking at **Herbert von Karajan**, on this occasion performing Brahms's Symphony No 2 with the Berlin Philharmonic.

April 9 (2pm) BBC R3
 A century and a half after **Bach's St Matthew Passion** was first performed in Britain, the BBC marks good Friday with a broadcast of the great work sung in English. Recorded the previous Sunday at the Royal Festival Hall, the Bach Choir and Florilegium are joined by Christopher Gillett, Michael George, Susan Gritton and Robin Blaze. David Hill conducts.

April 9 (8pm) Artsworld
Bartolomeo Cristofori and his amazing Loud-and-Soft Machine
 Howard Goodall looks at the events surrounding the birth of the piano.

April 12-16 (10am) BBC R3
CD Masters
 Mozart's Symphonies Nos 28, 29 and 31-34 get the CD Masters treatment, while the featured artists are Collegium Aureum.

April 12 (7.30pm) BBC R3
 Pianist **Steven Osborne** joins **Christoph von Dohnányi** and the **Philharmonia** for Mozart's Piano Concerto No 12. The concert also includes the first symphonies of Prokofiev and Mahler.

April 12 (8pm) Artsworld
The Rake's Progress
 Stravinsky's opera, in a Glyndebourne production with sets by David Hockney based on Hogarth, and starring Felicity Lott and Samuel Ramey.

April 14 (7.30pm) BBC R3
Anne Sofie von Otter performs at the Wigmore Hall.

April 14 (9pm) Artsworld
 A four-part celebration of Italian composer **Luciano Berio**, who died last year, begins with a documentary (9pm). It is followed (10pm) by **SOLO**, Berio's work for trombone and orchestra.

April 15 (8pm) Artsworld
Herbert von Karajan conducts Debussy's *La mer* and *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé Suite No 2* with the Berlin Philharmonic.

April 16 (7.30pm) BBC R3
Alice Coote, oft-tipped for great things, joins the **National Youth Orchestra** and **Andrew Litton** for Mahler's *Rückert Lieder*. Strauss's *Alpine Symphony* follows.

April 16 (8pm) Artsworld
Mary and her Little Lamb: The Invention of Recorded Sound
 Howard Goodall concludes his series exploring defining moments in musical history, by looking at how Edison's invention changed Western music history.

April 17 (5pm) BBC R3
Jane Eaglen sings Brünnhilde in the New York Met's production of Wagner's **Siegfried**. **James Levine** conducts the live broadcast.

FIND BERIO IN YOUR LIVING ROOM

Those who can't make it to the South Bank Centre for Omaggio (April 15-30), the festival devoted to Luciano Berio, who died last year, can still develop a greater understanding of the Italian composer's unique voice through television and radio.

Artsworld offers four programmes, beginning with a documentary profile about the composer (April 14), followed by a programme devoted to his work for trombone and orchestra, **SOLO**.

Berio's *Sinfonia*, perhaps his most famous piece, offers a tapestry of quotations from other composers, including Mahler, Stravinsky, Boulez, Schoenberg and Stockhausen, some of which are explored through performances of excerpts from the original works in a programme called *Voyage to Cythera* on April 17.

On April 19 Artsworld broadcasts a 1996 Théâtre du Châtelet production of *Outis*, Berio's opera based on the legends of the *Odyssey*.

April 17 (9.10pm) Artsworld
Voyage to Cythera

A documentary about Berio's *Sinfonia*, concentrating on the third movement collage of Mahler, Debussy, Stravinsky and many others. Many of the quotes are illustrated with rehearsals and performances of the original material. Features Berio, Riccardo Chailly and Louis Andriessen.

April 19-23 (10am) BBC R3
CD Masters

Lassus's music is explored this week, while Karajan's recordings with the Philharmonia are assessed.

April 19 (8pm) Artsworld
Outis
 Berio's opera based on the *Odyssey*, in a 1996 French production from the Théâtre du Châtelet, featuring baritones Alan Opie and Donald Maxwell and the Swingle Singers.

April 20 (1.30pm) BBC R4
The Name of the Father
 William Lloyd Webber, father of Andrew and Julian, held a number of musical positions throughout his life, including organist at All Saints Margeret Street,

April 22 (8pm) Artsworld
Herbert von Karajan, this time with the Vienna State Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra, conducts Mozart's *Requiem*, in 1985, joined by soprano Anna Tomowa-Sintow, alto Helga Müller Molinari, tenor Vinson Cole and bass Paata Burchuladze.

April 23 (7.30pm) BBC R3
 The opening concert of the Live Music Festival in Northern Ireland sees **Steven Isserlis**, **Janice Watson** and the **Ulster Orchestra** offering a programme that includes Ravel's *Boléro*, Strauss's *Four Last Songs* and Haydn's Cello Concerto.

April 24 (5pm) BBC R3
 Live broadcast of the final part of the New York Met's production of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, **Götterdämmerung**.

April 25 (7.30pm) BBC R3
Music Live hosts an **Opera Gala** in Belfast's Waterfront Hall, conducted by Sir Richard Armstrong. Starring Ailish Tynan, Jennifer Larmore, Bonaventura Bottone and William Dazeley.

April 26-30 (10am) BBC R3
CD Masters
 Music this week comes from, among others, Dukas and Chabrier. Christa Ludwig is the week's featured artist.

April 26 (8pm) Artsworld
Alceste
 Anne Sofie von Otter and Paul Groves lead the cast in Gluck's opera, with the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists conducted by John Eliot Gardiner.

April 28 (7.30pm) BBC R3
 Another all-Berio programme, this time the Piano Sonata, *Contrapunctus XIX*, *Ekphrasis* and *Sinfonia*. **Jukka-Pekka Saraste** is joined by **Andrea Lucchesini** and **Synergy**.

April 29 (8pm) Artsworld
Hélène Grimaud: Chamber Music
 sees the pianist perform Schumann at the Cité de la Musique, Paris, with Roland Daugareil and Nathalie Lamoureux (violins), Jean Dupouy (viola), Emmanuel Gaugue (cello) and Pascal Moragues (clarinet).

May 3 (7.30pm) BBC R3
Valery Gergiev leads the LSO in a **Prokofiev** evening, featuring his Symphonies Nos 1, 2 and 3.

May 4 (7.30pm) BBC R3
 Second of the **Valery Gergiev** all-**Prokofiev** evenings with the LSO. Tonight he offers Symphonies 4 and 5.

PICTURE CREDITS

Anne Sofie von Otter: DGG / JIM RAKETE; Julian Lloyd Webber: PRIVATE COLLECTION; Valery Gergiev: DG / UNIVERSAL



CLIVE BARDEN/REXUS

Meanwhile, Radio 3 offers broadcasts from the South Bank festival, including on April 21 *Ritorno degli snovidenia*, *Corale* and *Voci*, performed by the London Sinfonietta and David Robertson.

On April 28, Radio 3 broadcasts the previous day's RFH concert, featuring the Piano Sonata, *Contrapunctus XIX*, *Ekphrasis* and *Sinfonia*.

London, and lecturer at the Royal College of Music, yet was reluctant to promote his own compositions. Presented by Richard Baker, this programme explores his life, including interviews with his sons.

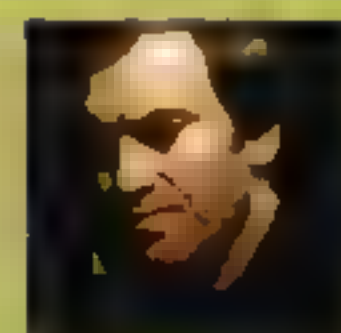
April 21 (7.30pm) BBC R3
 An all-Berio concert from the **London Sinfonietta** and **David Robertson** includes *Ritorno degli snovidenia*, *Corale* and *Voci*.



Swedish mezzo Anne Sofie von Otter whose new disc, 'Watercolours' is out now, performs from the Wigmore Hall on April 14 on Radio 3. She also appears in *Alceste* on Artsworld, April 26.



William Lloyd Webber composer, organist and teacher, is probably most famous today as 'father of'. Is this fair? Richard Baker explores the life and output of the shy plumber's son.



Valery Gergiev surely one of the hardest-working conductors in the business, leads the LSO in two all-Prokofiev programmes in May on Radio 3, beginning with Symphony No 1.

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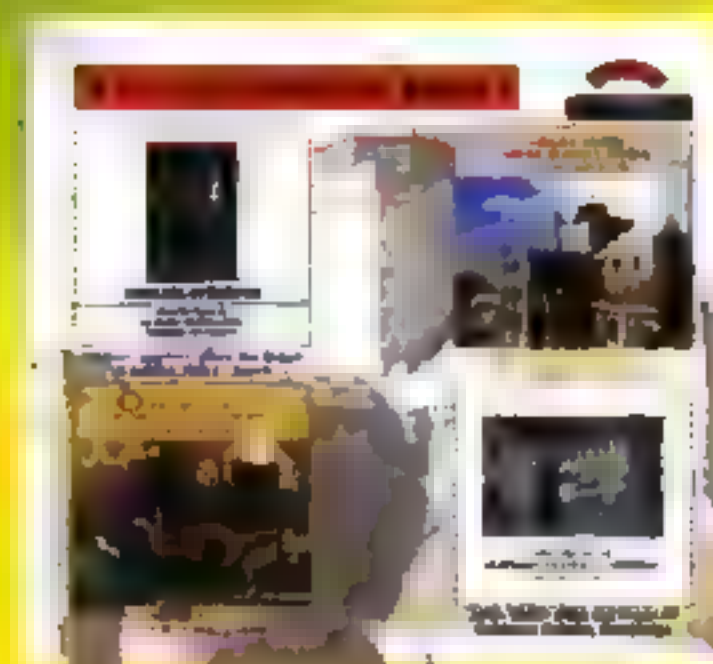
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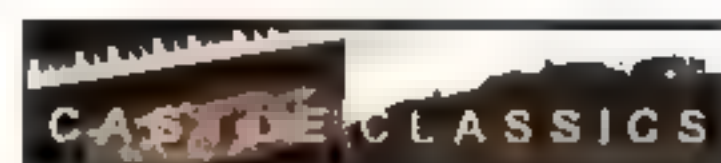
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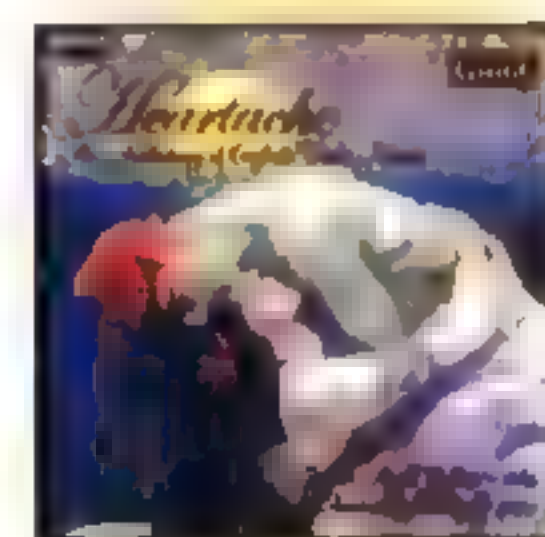
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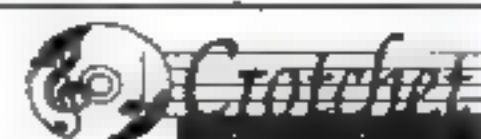
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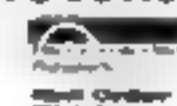
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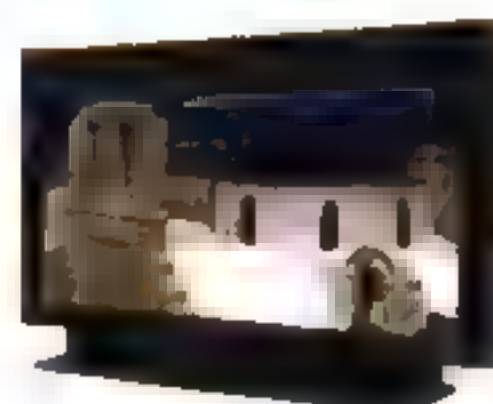
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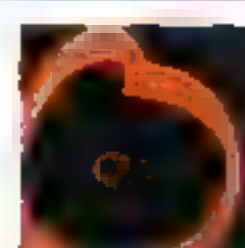
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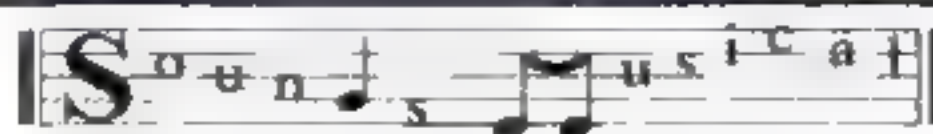
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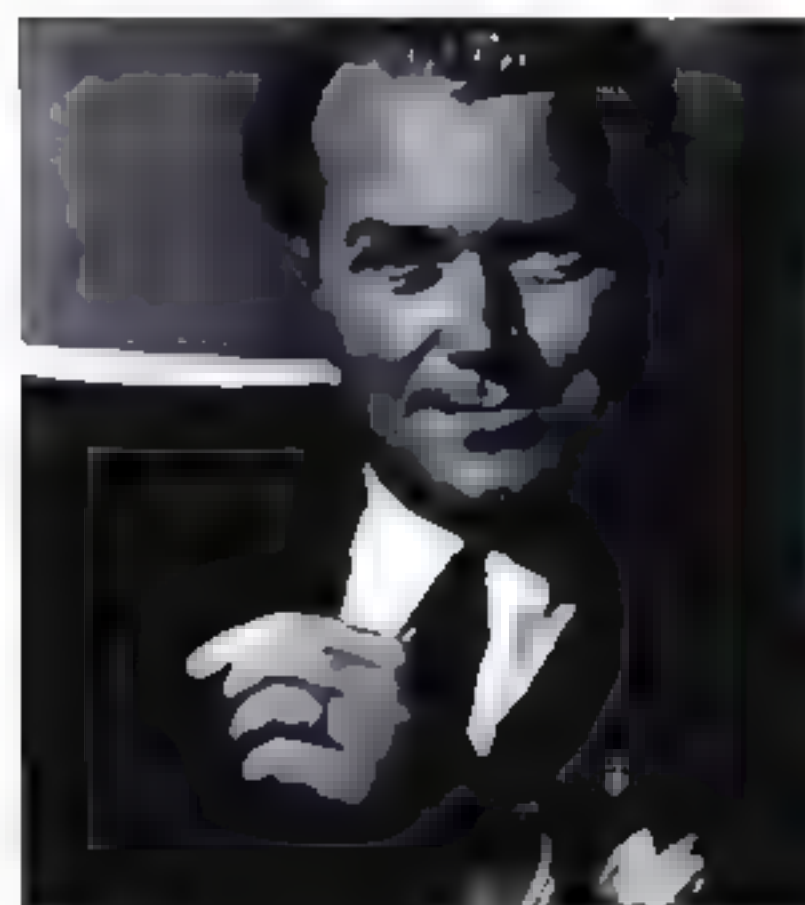
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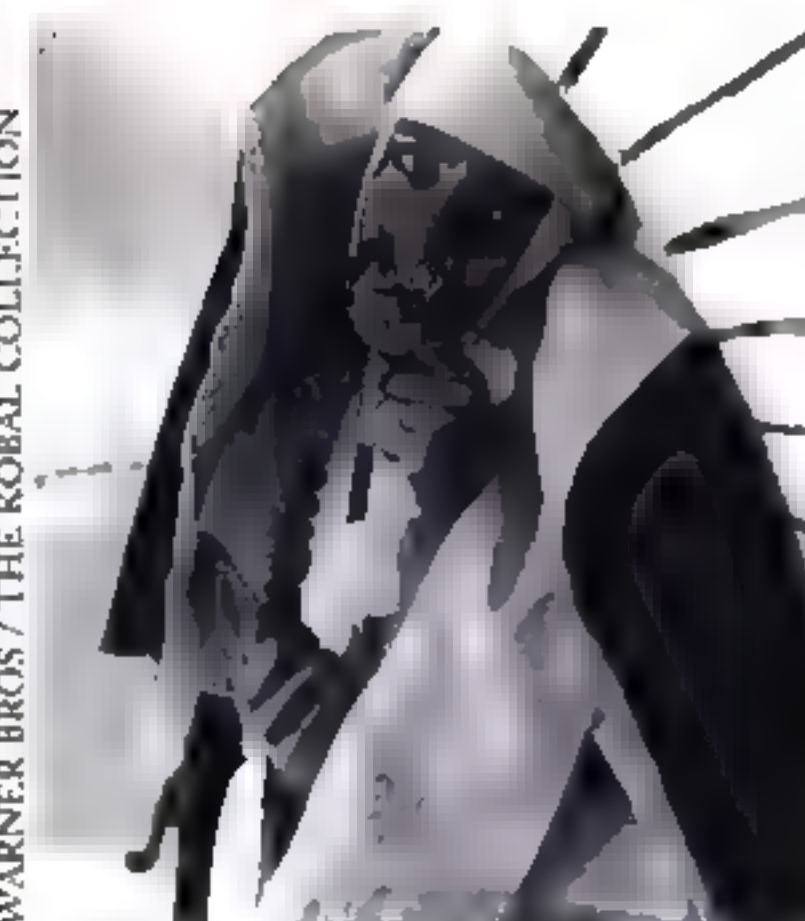
The issues that concerned us, the recordings we listened to down the years



1934
Gerhard Hüsch's *Winterreise* needs a little push from the Editor

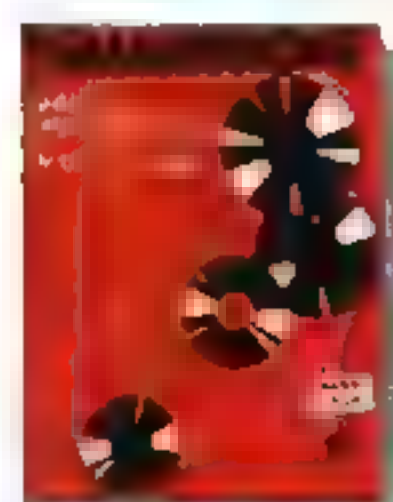


1954
Martha Mödl's *Isolde* enshrined on disc as part of Wilhelm Furtwängler's famous EMI set



1974
Ken Russell's tale of morality and madness, *The Devils* – with music by David Munrow

1934



THE EDITOR URGES HIS READERS TO SIGN UP FOR THE HMV SCHUBERT LIEDER EDITION

Compton Mackenzie's editorial was something of a call to arms to his readers who, he felt, were being a little slow in signing up for the *Winterreise* volume in the HMV Schubert Lieder Society Edition. 'I am not breaking a confidence when I say that not even yet has the album of *Winterreise* been taken up as it should have been taken up.' The performance by Gerhard Hüsch was, he declared, 'one of the most remarkable musical achievements of our time'. He urged readers to take the subscriptions past the 500 mark.

The editor also put in a plea for support for a recent collection of German folksongs sung by Richard Tauber and accompanied by Mischa Spoliansky. 'It is difficult when one listens to these exquisite simplicities of emotion,' he wrote, 'to imagine how a nation which produced them could behave like the German nation during the last quarter of a century.' And this was still only 1934...

Lily Pons was interviewed and shared her views on many subjects, including the necessity for vocal students to listen to gramophone recordings so that they could study the great singers of the day, the need to master another instrument and above all the sense not to rush into a professional career: 'The voice of a girl in her 'teens is an incredibly delicate and fragile instrument, and if used too soon, or incorrectly, its beauty is destroyed for all time.' She did – like many divas – make a rather rash prediction: 'I have decided that I shall personally continue upon the professional stage for only ten years. I am thirty now, and by that time, at forty, I shall be at my best – I hope! But I shall not sing until I am old and fat. No, I shall retire to the house I intend to build at Cannes and shall raise animals.' She retired 24 years later!

1954



WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER'S FIDELIO GETS THE THUMBS UP FROM ALEC ROBERTSON

A poignant few sentences opening the editorial conveyed the news that Toscanini had conducted his last public concert. Realising he could no longer rely on his memory, the great Italian maestro had changed the Carnegie Hall programme. But after concluding the *Meistersinger* Prelude 'his right hand dropped to his side and the baton fell to the floor. A member of the orchestra picked it up and handed it to him as he slowly left the platform. He did not come back.' And so the 68-year career of possibly the most famous classical musician of his age came to a close.

In his 'Quarterly retrospect', Edward Sackville-West lamented the current obsession with 'omnibus volumes, for complete performances of a composer's oeuvre – or, if not that, at least some part of it'. (Goodness knows what he'd have said about the Philips Mozart Edition.) It was Mozart that set him off – Walter Gieseking's survey of the piano music: 'Irresistibly the image arises of the pianist leaning forward on the stool, peering at the score and playing, cautiously and accurately, but without the slightest sense of ease or spontaneity, exactly what he sees on the page.' And he shudders at the thought of Claudio Arrau's complete Chopin, rumours of which were reaching these shores from the US.

Probably the most de luxe release this month was the HMV set of Beethoven's *Fidelio* conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler with Wolfgang Windgassen and Martha Mödl in the principal roles. 'If this is not a superlative vocal performance of the opera,' wrote Alec Robertson, 'it is by no means a negligible one, and it would certainly be hard to assemble a better cast for it today.' Fullest praise was reserved for Furtwängler's conducting, so sensitive to Leonore's dilemma.

1974



DAVID MUNROW REVEALS HE'D RATHER LISTEN TO OTHER PEOPLE'S RECORDINGS

A very minimalist cover revealed that Antál Dorati had recorded a disc of Messiaen – it turned out to be the first-ever recording of *La Transfiguration de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ*. A large 'cast' including pianist Yvonne Loriod joined the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington. Felix Aprahamian was quite ecstatic about the set but to be safe, he had played it to a friend, 'a music-loving man of letters with no technical knowledge of music'. The verdict: 'I felt that we were in the Presence of God.'

The main interview this month was with the recorder player, broadcaster and scholar David Munrow. Alan Blyth was bowled over by Munrow's enthusiasm. It was around the time that Munrow was broadcasting regularly on his BBC Radio 3 programme *Pied Piper* and he admitted that he was invariably disappointed with his own recordings but was an avid collector of other people's. He also revealed he'd been doing a lot of music for films – for Ken Russell's *The Devils*, a film on Henry VIII and he'd recently been talking to John Boorman about *Zardoz* with Sean Connery. (He was also considering music for a film about cyclist Eddy Merckx.)

The first review this month was a disc of Leopold Stokowski conducting the Czech Philharmonic in his own transcriptions of Bach. The sleeve quoted Hans Keller as saying: 'Many Bach-lovers may hate Stokowski's approach, but Bach would have loved it'. Edward Greenfield sided with Keller while pointing out some slightly scruffy orchestral playing (these were live recordings).

Richard Osborne devoted nearly a page to Emil Gilels's DG disc of two Beethoven piano sonatas, declaring the pianist a peerless Beethovenian possessing 'fineness of technique, fierceness and an acute sense of style'. ●

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My music

The Genesis keyboardist and now composer shares his passion for classical music

Tony Banks



NEALE OSBORNE

My mother was musical – she had a very good piano technique – but she did need the music in front of her. I didn't. Or at least I wasn't a natural at reading music; I was better at picking up things by ear. My father was tone-deaf. When I was 13 or 14 I'd play the piano all day every day, but the prospect of music as a career was just a fantasy.

By 1963 The Beatles were breaking through and everybody wanted to be in a band, even if not everybody expected you to be – especially if you were at Charterhouse School. It wasn't the done thing. In fact we weren't allowed radios or gramophones in the school! But it was there that I met Peter Gabriel and our musical tastes started to develop together – we got heavily into American soul, the Beach Boys, Jimi Hendrix, quite a mix. We would write songs together with another student, Mike Rutherford.

It was seeing The Nice at the Marquis Club in London, one of the most exciting experiences of

that means trying to do things that hadn't been done before, then, yes, we were a Progressive Rock band. But we were different from bands like Yes or Pink Floyd. We thought of ourselves as songwriters and a little more sophisticated.

There were other musical references, too: I love Ravel's strong melodies and his use of unusual notes in compound chords, not so much the style, more the pianistic effect of it. The opening of *Daphnis and Chloe* – something repetitive that rises up to a big release with a key change at the top of the build – appeals enormously. Harmony is where I start when I write – I think chords upwards.

Stravinsky doesn't excite me much, but I do love *The Rite of Spring* – those bold rhythmic brass phrases! – and our guitarist, Steve Hackett, liked Albinoni, Satie and classical guitar and he brought a more specifically classical edge to the band. 'Classical' is a funny word – to me it's Beethoven, it's back in time – that's why I call *Seven* an orchestral work. The kind of music I write is quite rich harmonically, and allows me to go

'The kind of music I write is harmonically rich, it's music that allows me to go places'

IN MY PLAYER...

Martinů probably suffered from being too prolific, but I love the wild things



Martinů Symphony No 4. Memorial to Lidice. Czech PO / Bělohlávek Chandos © CHAN9138 (5/93)

he does with his chords, particularly in the Fourth Symphony – the fast second movement is particularly effective in its control of the strong rhythms that pulse through it. Equally, the *Memorial to Lidice*, which is so simple in the way it builds up (albeit with a slightly embarrassing quote at the end from Beethoven's Fifth) that it's difficult not to admire it.

my life, that got me thinking about performing live. So having spent a year at university (I was reading chemistry and then logic with physics) we decided instead to form Genesis. Our first single, *The Silent Sun*, deliberately sounded like the Bee Gees but we wanted to be more than just a pop band. The live element of Genesis was always interesting, even if it wasn't always planned: Peter would often surprise us with his costumes but it got us noticed. We were occasionally accused of being a Glam Rock band, but that wasn't us at all. The visuals were always just a way of interpreting the music, of adding atmosphere, of telling stories.

From our early days we liked the extended song, so the idea of doing a connected album, a 'song-cycle' – 'The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway' – was very appealing and it became a sort of signature album for us. The label that did stick to us was 'Progressive' and if

places. I wanted to do a totally pure thing, nothing hybrid, no synthetic instruments, with a palette developed over centuries and with a lovely combination of sounds. I love the sound of choirs for that reason, too, although I have a problem with the operatic style of singing, that very tutored voice, the heavy vibrato that *used* to be the rule, it's something I've never got used to. I'd rather listen to Otis Redding.

Seven's influences are largely 20th-century British – Vaughan Williams, the archetypal English composer; Elgar because he's so strong melodically; Delius because he's capable of building such strong atmospheres. I can see definite influences in the second part of *Seven*, but I hope it's less obvious elsewhere. It surprised me how accessible it sounded. The strong themes which I build to, do deliver. I'm trying to build everything to send a shiver down the spine. ☉

The Naxos recording of Tony Banks's suite for orchestra, *Seven*, is reviewed on page 40

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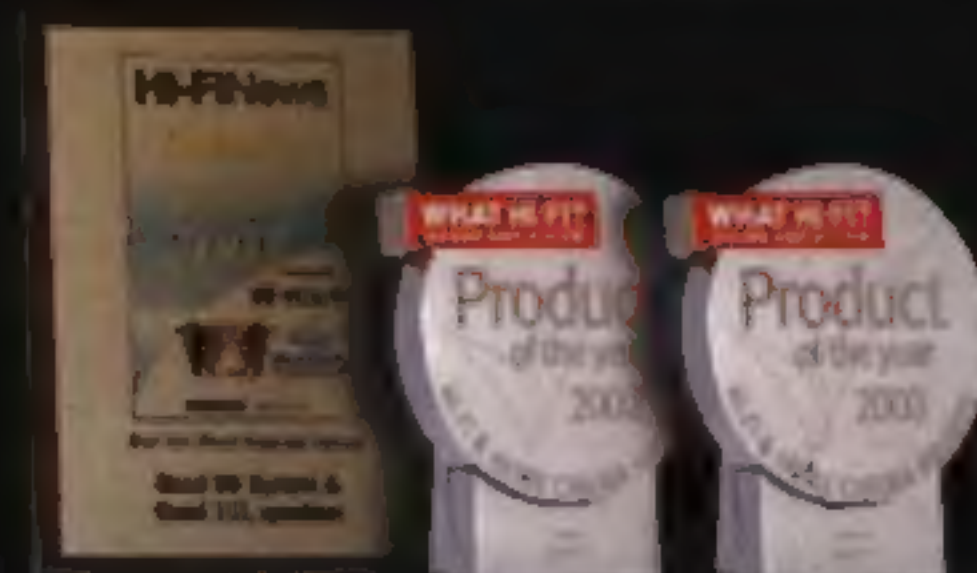
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